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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Ah, the woes of distinguished citizens who seek to serve their fellows in some selfless capacity. Take Neil Bush. Here he was, a novice in financial matters, appointed in 1985 to the board of the Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan Association. This rising young man had far better things to do with his time, but if you are the son of a Vice President of the United States, you must accept the call of duty. Neil knew his access to Washington via his father—nothing improper in *that*, of course—would enable him better to serve his bank and his community.

But look what happened. Poor Neil was made the scapegoat of Silverado's failure and hauled before a federal judge on conflict of interest charges. Fortunately, the judge was a kindly gentleman and let Neil off with some fatherly advice to try to avoid bad company.

Now the harpies of the press are shrieking at John Sununu simply because he's sometimes an abrasive fellow. The pretext is that he made seventy-seven flights in government planes, including four skiing vacations and twenty trips to speak at Republican Party affairs. Apparently, Sununu's critics expect the President's most loyal privy counselor to go by commercial airlines and risk being hijacked by fierce Libyan terrorists or contracting salmonella poisoning from airline food or getting trapped in an airport traffic jam. Fortunately, we can count on President Bush to ignore the spiteful attacks on this great public servant.

In the latest injustice, Exxon was betrayed by a punitive federal judge who ruled that a $100 million fine on the company was not sufficient punishment. As John Sununu might say, this shows how some people care more about the environment than the rights of a great corporation. So long as Exxon is not free, none of us are free.

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WAR AND REFUGEES
Aryeh Neier

CNN CONQUERS THE WORLD
Jay Rosen

ONE-WAY RADIO
Holly Cowan Shulman

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Harry C. Boyte

COSTNER'S NEW CUSTERISM
David Seals

DISCOVERY/ 'THE NATION' POETRY WINNERS

NEW LIGHT ON PELTIER'S CASE

WHO REALLY KILLED THE F.B.I. MEN

PETER MATTHIESSEN

In the spring of 1983, two months after the publication of my book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, the publisher, Viking Press, and I—and also some South Dakota booksellers—were sued for libel by former Governor William Janklow for $24 million. In January 1984, the publisher, attorney Bruce Ellison and I were sued by Special Agent David Price of the F.B.I. for $25 million, or $49 million in all. Since Price had assured me in our lengthy interview for the book that he never made a move without the approval of his superiors, and since an F.B.I. agent's salary could never pay for the very expensive attorneys he retained, it was assumed that the F.B.I. itself had sponsored his suit in order to lend some sort of credibility to the suit by Janklow (who was already suing *Newsweek* on related grounds), and that both suits were intended mainly as chastisement and harassment as well as a means of keeping the book out of circulation.

Eight years of litigation and eight court decisions, all the way to the United States Supreme Court, have borne out the original opinion of Viking's attorneys that the book was free of libel. The main victim of these intimidation suits has been Leonard Peltier, an American Indian Movement leader and the subject of the book, who was deprived of his main organizing tool in his fight for justice. Peltier is still in prison, convicted of murdering two F.B.I. agents in a shootout near Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1975.

(*Cont. on p. 628*)

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LETTERS.

RAP RECORD?

Tempe, Ariz.
Professor Adolph Reed Jr. has set a record for invective that might just be included in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. In his review of Shelby Steele's *The Content of Our Character* ["Steele Trap," March 4], he applies the following terms and phrases to Steele and to his book: abominably thin, simple-minded, particularly limited, castles of psychobabble, platitudes, banal autobiographical anecdotes, ignorant speculation, unworthy of review on its merits, self-improvement bromides, artfully crafted drivel, homely clichés, perverse carnival, vacuity, silly, obscene spectacle, fatuousness, trite, idiotic self-awareness patter, Guardian of Racial Accomplishment, racialist thinking, soundbite existentialism, blather, just a fool, meanspirited, contemptuous, hot-tub philosophical detachment, he snarls, black American stigmatist, beyond his ken, crippled, Cliffs Notes intellect, homilies, catch phrases, ignorance, solipsistic, feral child, preposterous, breathtakingly uninformed, nostalgia masquerading as analysis, factoids, obscenely wrongheaded, pontificate, lazy, demeaning, nothing useful to say, too stupid to recognize, disingenuous, irresponsible, hollow, smooth-edged, neatly packaged fabrication, Disney World facsimile, racist outrage, disgusting racial presumptions, foolishness.

I get it now. Professor Reed doesn't like either Mr. Steele or his book.

Jacob Goldberg

REVIEW RAVE

San Francisco
Adolph Reed's review was refreshing in its detailed critique of the historical and social context in which Steele's book is embedded and displays a high level of knowledge of the black experience. I have circulated it among several of my colleagues, all of whom have commented on its insight and thoroughness. I also enjoyed his wit and sarcasm immensely.

Laura D. Head, professor
black studies

REED REPLIES

New Haven
Thanks to Laura Head for her kind words. Jacob Goldberg's response to my review is within its own parameters clever. I surmise that he mainly finds me intemperate, and he seems not particularly attentive to the substance of my criticisms or what has so outraged me. His inattentiveness exemplifies the problem. What if the review had responded to the most recent and most bankrupt of a series of Jews who had become highly visible public icons and attained legitimacy in respectable intellectual circles solely by affirming anti-Semitic prejudices—by asserting, say, that because of their long lack of a homeland and history of oppression, Jews have developed a pathological fixation on acquiring money and are inadequately committed as citizens in the states in which they reside? What if the imagined author had no particular expertise other than his Jewishness, made no attempt at coherent argument or to present evidence but instead simply rattled off barbershop prejudices and in return was universally regarded as a bold new voice and lauded for his courage? Would Goldberg be so blasé about content, so flippant or so exclusively focused on the virtues of temperance? I don't think so. As I suggested at the end of my review, what accounts for the difference is what is outrageous.

Adolph Reed Jr.

PEACE MOVEMENT BLUES . . .

Seattle
Michael Klare's article "The Peace Movement's Next Steps" [March 25] provided an important service. A serious omission, however, is his failure to mention the United Nations. The peace movement must work for the restructuring and strengthening of the U.N. One tragedy of these past months is U.S. manipulation of the United Nations to serve American interests. I propose that three of Klare's steps—reduce global militarization, achieve reconciliation in the Middle East and put nuclear arms control back on track—require action by the United Nations.

Milton Karr

. . . AND GREENS

Wilmington, Ohio
We were surprised that Michael Klare's analysis fails even to mention the destruction of the environment. The gulf war was a war against the Earth, in which environmental weaponry was used as a deliberate instrument of national policy. Environmental and peace groups are talking about the same thing—survival of humankind and the other species with whom we share this planet.

Marjorie Hope and James Young

GRAND OLD PARTIES?

Berkeley, Calif.
It was interesting to note that Professor Klare's first two steps (reducing global militarization and reconciliation in the Middle East) have already been articulated by President Bush, while the fourth (arms control) is built on seeming Reagan Administration successes. Have the Republicans already set the agenda for the 1990s? Certainly Klare and Bush do not define these issues in the same way. Part of the challenge, then, will come in articulating the differences.

Dion Nissenbaum

HELL NO . . .

Moscow
It is strange that Michael Klare should bemoan the fact that "the movement failed to stop a horrific and unnecessary war." The peace forces didn't stop the Vietnam War either. They did play a significant role in bringing it to an end twenty years after it started. The gulf war didn't last two months. Had it gone on longer, the movement against it would have gained strength. Not because of "body bags" but because there would have been time for public education and debate (remember where we were when the teach-ins began?), because the question of the draft would most likely have been raised and because the level of jingoism and psychological warfare directed at the home front would have become difficult to sustain. No, we didn't stop the war. We didn't stop the rape of Grenada or the violation of Panama either. One can empathize with Klare's "sadness stemming from our inability to prevent the Persian Gulf war," but somehow it doesn't seem to be the right mood.

Carl Bloice
People's Weekly World

WORDS OF A 'NERDY CITIZEN'

San Francisco
Michael Klare's article is fine as far as it goes, but it begs a deeply troublesome question: In light of the unchallenged control of the military, the media, the government and the minds of the people by the so-called "corporate elite," what prospect is there of real change in this country?

Telegrams and letters to the White House and pep rallies among ourselves accomplish little. We're constantly scrambling to find out the latest dirty doings, and meanwhile these guys are seventy steps ahead in planning their next wars, assaults on the environment and infringements on civil liberties. Even if Bush were impeached (fat chance), there'd be a temporary furor, a few heads would roll and business would proceed as usual, albeit a bit more cautiously. The peace movement and intellectuals like Klare, with all due respect and appreciation for their efforts, are tolerated because they're ineffectual. If a true leader arose, he/she'd be in danger of being killed on the spot. If the peace movement became even a trifle effective, we'd see repression that would make our heads spin.

So what is the point of this "optimism" that the peace movement frequently expresses because a small number of us nerdy citizens are catching on to a bit of what's going on? All efforts for peace and sanity are commendable and desirable, of course, but the vast majority of Americans are more duped than ever and, worse, want to stay that way. That's why they call for more censorship. Why give people false encouragement? If there's any hope for a better future for this world—and I'm pessimistic about that—surely it must be founded on looking the truth in the face and going from there. Otherwise we're denying and distorting reality, just like the horrendously destructive people we oppose.

Allan Jacobson

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EDITORIALS.

Let George Do It?

History's ironies intrude in the oddest places, but who would have expected the first head-to-head replay of the tumultuous 1972 presidential election campaign to happen on the Trump Shuttle from Washington to New York? Seated next to each other across the center aisle were George McGovern and Richard Nixon, the archest of enemies twenty years before, and now either fallen or forgotten senior statesmen in certain stages of rehabilitation.

Nixon was poring over a manuscript. McGovern, as it happened, was on his way to speak at a *Nation*/New School forum, the first of a series featuring prospective presidential candidates. According to McGovern, who is "exploring" the possibility of another run, they chatted amiably about this and that, Gorbachev and China, Democrats and Republicans. Mercifully, perhaps, there was no mention of money laundering or office break-ins, and McGovern, who says he is long over his anger at CREEP's campaign, did not bring up sore subjects.

Nixon, however, did comment on McGovern's projected quest for the nomination, about which the adjective "quixotic" often comes to commentators' lips. The important thing, Dick told George, was to "get your message across," to express the principles of your program and damn the media, damn the polls . . . and, if it comes to that, damn the results on Election Day. The old foes de-Trumped, and the ironic moment was lost in the fuel-fog of La Guardia.

McGovern is already making a game attempt to broadcast a

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message of progressive reform in foreign policy and domestic economic affairs, the logical extension of his 1972 platform. He is promoting a Canadian-style national health program and severe cuts in the military budget. He disarmingly admits to bafflement in the face of the overwhelming power of the corporate mass media to manipulate public opinion, and he is not naïve about the ability of the other George—that man in the White House—to exploit the authority of his office to win re-election.

Unless America is a lot more topsy-turvy than even he believes, he will not be the Democratic nominee. But who else is there? No one on the scene so far shows the slightest interest in mobilizing the electorate behind a program or a campaign that would seriously challenge the one-party system developed by the Reagan and Bush administrations with the sorry connivance of the Congressional Democratic leadership.

Governor Douglas Wilder of Virginia, who just came out against unrestricted voter registration, is a hopeless devotee of the most retrograde party policies. Governor Mario Cuomo of New York is now in the process of Reaganizing the state budget and selling out his few remaining progressive supporters. Senator Al Gore of Tennessee is so proud of his support for Bush's war in the gulf that he cannot see what a disaster he could be for the Democratic future. Senator Paul Tsongas cannot possibly distinguish himself from that other Greek neoliberal from the Boston suburbs. Jesse Jackson has been so battered by the other Democrats, by the media and by disgruntled activists (white and black) who expected him to organize and lead a permanent progressive movement that he doubts now whether another round in the electoral ring is worth the pain. And there's an embryonic boomlet for Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, hero of Operation Desert Turkeyshoot, who apparently is a registered Democrat in Tampa. *Please.*

In short, the Democratic Party is bereft of popular and progressive leaders at the grass roots and burdened with self-serving, scared and opportunistic control freaks in Congress. Not since the 1920s has the picture been so dim. But things happen fast in media-modulated America today, and it is not inconceivable that a political prairie fire could start between now and primary season.

McGovern had no more charisma in 1972 than he does now, but he and the movement that supported him managed to take over the party. Losing the election should have been the least of their worries. There was plenty of reason to keep organizing against the day, which was bound to come, when the movement would become a majority. "Revolutionary patience," as Jesse Jackson liked to say, is a virtue. Once again there is a movement waiting to happen, and only the leaders and their courage is lacking.

•

N.B. Three days before McGovern's New School appearance, another George—Foreman, the aging, 257-pound former heavyweight champion—made an unexpectedly strong showing in his losing effort against Evander Holyfield. Like McGovern, he had humor and heart, but it turned out he was over the hill. After the fight, he said, "[The champ] won on points, but I made a point." Questions: Will the Democrats be content to let George do it? Can he go the distance? Is scoring points more important than making a point?

FOLLOW-UP

The two Italian legislators who were arrested for defying a New York State law barring possession of syringes without a prescription walked (see John T. Schuler and Jonathan M.M. Soroko, "Lethal Injections," April 22). The Manhattan District Attorney's office dropped the charges against Emma Bonino, a member of the Italian Parliament, and Marco Taradash, a delegate to the European Parliament, who had attempted to present a package of sterile syringes to New York Mayor David Dinkins, a staunch opponent of giving clean needles to I.V. drug users. Immediately after the dismissal, Bonino and Taradash proceeded to the office of Health Commissioner Woodrow Myers and tried to get arrested again, without success. They had better luck at City Hall, but the D.A.'s office refused to prosecute—ever.

Nonetheless, the trial of members of the ACT UP Needle Exchange and the National AIDS Brigade on identical charges went forward. On April 8, a parade of expert witnesses for the defense overwhelmed the D.A.'s office. Whatever the legal outcome, one wonders if there isn't a moral issue that's being overlooked here: Should a good Samaritan be prosecuted for giving an addict a clean needle and saving him or her from AIDS? A jury in a Redwood, California, needle exchange case apparently did not think so. It voted 11 to 1 for acquittal, and the jury foreman announced that he intends to get arrested for handing out sterile syringes on the steps of the courthouse.

Breaking the Ban

RU 486, the French abortion pill used successfully by 60,000 French women and soon to be introduced into Britain, has long been blocked from the United States by anti-choice fundamentalists, conservative Catholics and a small Congressional bloc. These groups, moreover, have now prevented many U.S. scientists from conducting research into non-abortion uses of RU 486 that could make it a boon to millions of Americans.

RU 486 is also used in cases of difficult and prolonged labor, often reducing the need for a caesarean section. RU 486 has proved valuable in cases of Cushing's disease. It is a promising treatment for brain tumors and ovarian and breast cancer. But women in the United States are denied this therapy. It could become a much-needed birth control method. A single monthly dose (twelve per year instead of about 240 birth control pills) prevents pregnancy; the user would not know whether fertilization had taken place.

Crucial research into these uses, however, has been stymied

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by extremist members of Congress, who forced the Food and Drug Administration to impose an import ban on RU 486. As a result, said Dr. Kathryn Horwitz, a breast cancer specialist at the University of Colorado testifying at a Congressional hearing, she couldn't receive the drug in the mail from Roussel-Uclaf, the French manufacturer, or go to France herself and bring it back. Dr. William Regelson of the Medical College of Virginia testified that Roussel had refused to meet with his research group on breast cancer or supply it with the drug.

Although Roussel claims it will continue to supply RU 486 to the National Institutes of Health and other places conducting F.D.A.-approved human testing, the F.D.A. ban has prevented scientists like Dr. Horwitz from doing basic laboratory research. Roussel and Hoechst, its parent company, which does about $6 billion annually in U.S. business, fear right-wing boycotts of their other products, particularly by Catholic hospitals. Hoechst has dodged the issue by insisting "our policy remains undefined."

What antiabortionists fear, of course, is that research into the use of RU 486 to treat cancer or other medical conditions would eventually promote its introduction into the United States as an abortifacient. Since the drug can be administered in a doctor's office and extremists could hardly picket or invade all of them, the antiabortion campaign could be seriously crippled.

RU 486's great advantages are effectiveness and safety. It induces abortion 96 percent of the time, and the remaining cases can be treated by vacuum abortion. Only two of the 60,000 French women who have taken the drug have incurred even a temporary problem (both were over 35 and under severe stress). Another woman died from the follow-up dose of prostaglandin. But she was a heavy smoker who should have been barred from taking the drug by medical guidelines. A death rate of one in 80,000 (the total number of women in Western countries who have taken RU 486) compares favorably with the 1.1 deaths per 100,000 penicillin shots.

An RU 486 abortion produces a heavy menstrual flow—slightly more than a normal period, as doctors describe it. It offers women a nonsurgical choice preferable to surgical procedures, according to the California Medical Association, which is backed by a similar A.M.A. resolution. Above all, RU 486 puts women in control of their own bodies. "What I liked was taking care of myself, not being in the hands of doctors," one woman reported.

Although a Louis Harris poll shows that 59 percent of Americans want immediate acceptance of RU 486, many abortion rights and women's groups believe that a hard-core opposition and Roussel's timidity will delay the pill's introduction for at least a decade. Demanding bold new strategies, pro-choice groups see two possible approaches. One would develop an exact copy of RU 486—this has already been done in China—under "mini-F.D.A. laws" in at least a dozen states, including California, Connecticut and New York. These new laws allow testing of a new drug whose components are all made within the state and distributed only in the state, putting the approval process under state health departments rather than the politically buffeted F.D.A. Volunteers would be tested without charge according to the highest scientific standards. A board of chemical experts would have to prove that the duplicate pill matches RU 486. Roussel might claim patent infringement, but women's groups should convince the company that such early tests will pave the way for Roussel's sale of its pill in the United States. Any F.D.A. challenge would raise constitutional issues, to be resolved in the courts.

A second approach—pioneered by a major research institute—would be to develop a pill that works similarly to RU 486 but differs enough chemically to secure its own U.S. patent. Once animal and other necessary tests are successfully completed, the institute would submit its data for F.D.A. approval before getting authorization for human tests. Whether the agency's decision will turn on political or scientific considerations is, of course, the ultimate question.

Extremists will undoubtedly fight both approaches, but the abortion rights movement must raise enough national support to guarantee that America has the same access to good medicine as France and Britain. LAWRENCE LADER

Lawrence Lader, founding chair of the National Abortion Rights Action League, is author of RU 486: A Pill That Could End the Abortion Wars and Why American Women Don't Have It *(Addison-Wesley).*

★

JUDGING NANCY

You think she really did some things untoward
With Frankie S., the chairman of the board?
So what! The world is surely in a muddle
When two old folks can't have a little cuddle
Right after lunch, no matter where they are—
The White House or a small romantic bar.
And frankly, I don't really see the point
Of fainting at the thought she smoked a joint.
Oh sure, she lied, she stole, she slipped her shiv
Into some backs. All this I could forgive.
But one thing boggles even now my mind:
The teddy bear her grandson left behind.
Unrecognized, old Ursus theodore
Was tossed among the presents that this schnorrer
Reused. A birthday? Reach into the sack:
The little fellow gets his own bear back.
I do not judge our Nancy, like some folks.
I've crimes myself: harsh thoughts, bad jokes.
But when she meets her maker, is she ready
To justify her treatment of that teddy?

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Amnesty International in Incubator Climb-Down

On April 18, Amnesty International announced that its fact-finding team, recently returned from Kuwait, had been able to confirm a "wave of arbitrary arrests, torture and killings" there since the withdrawal of Iraqi forces. "However," AI's news release continued, "on the highly publicized issue in the December report of the deaths of babies, Amnesty International said that although its team was shown alleged mass graves of babies, it was not established how they died and the team found no reliable evidence that Iraqi forces had caused the deaths of babies by removing them or ordering their removal from incubators."

The chair of Amnesty International USA, Winston Nagan, kindly forwarded me an early copy of the release "because of your interest in this topic." Such gentility did not earlier elevate the soul of AI USA's executive director, John Healey, who suggested in an "Amnesty Action" bulletin for March/April that "some well-known critics of U.S. Government policies began to read the report [on Iraq's human rights abuses in Kuwait] and publicly wish it away." Healey must have been talking about me, since to my knowledge no one else had been critical of any aspect of the report. In other words, anyone challenging AI on any detail was thereby whitewashing Iraqi atrocities altogether.

This dishonesty on Healey's part is well matched by his earlier opportunism. In the first three weeks of August, Amnesty International rushed out a mass mailing, in the form of phony telegrams, announcing, "While this massive war-threatening crisis captures us all, we cannot for a single instant forget the thousands of innocent men and women in Iraq who have long been suffering atrocious human rights violations under the government of Saddam Hussein. . . . In addition, we must utilize every possible means to alert the press." Said expression of resolve amounted to a request for money. Jeffrey Larson, who received the message and sent it on to me, later wrote to Healey, "I was very disappointed to see that Amnesty International USA has jumped on the bandwagon of adding to and exploiting chauvinistic war fever by singling out Iraq as the subject of an emergency alert," particularly as, in this instance, the press was recounting Iraq's abuses in voluminous detail.

Larson went on to suggest to Healey that if AI USA was going to use its resources for a special alert, why did it not do so "for concerns that need attention because they are out of favor with the establishment in the US, such as violations of human and civil rights in the wake of the invasion of Panama (or what AI USA calls an 'entry' into that foreign country), or the midnight deportation of mothers and young children from the Israeli-occupied West Bank. . . . It is questionable at best for AI USA to inflame American passions against Iraq and especially to do so as part of a fund appeal."

Minerva's Children

By its destruction of Iraq's ability to furnish its citizens with safe water and sewage facilities, as I pointed out here back on March 4, the United States was practicing a very effective form of germ warfare, since the hot weather will bring the certainty of devastating epidemics. U.N. agencies report that this is imminent.

I likened the destruction to what the Mongol Ulagu, brother of Kublai Khan, did to Baghdad in 1258, destroying the irrigation system "that was the basis of Abbasid civilization and hence its military capacity." Now my friend Professor Israel Shahak writes from Jerusalem to tell me that this is poor history; that though Ulagu slaughtered almost all the inhabitants of Baghdad *after* the surrender of the Caliph (thus prefiguring the slaughter on the Basra road at the end of February 1991), his destruction of the irrigation system is a myth.

Shahak then cites M.A. Shaban's *Islamic History, A New Interpretation* for its description of the late Abbasid empire, from A.D. 850 on:

> The government saw all its duties and responsibilities in terms of enforcing tax-collection, the revenues of which were to support a growing and corrupt bureaucracy and an almost useless army. When it came to public services the government did not seem to consider that these fell within the realm of its reponsibilities. Even necessary repairs to the delicate irrigation systems which had been previously paid for by the government were now charged to the users who had to pay for them over and above the required taxes.

Shaban also recounts how huge swaths of land were given by the later Abbasids to absentee generals, further degrading the irrigation systems and much else. Shahak goes on to say:

> In fact, this Iraqi cataclysm myth contains (as in other cases) only a grain of truth. Goths did not destroy the buildings of Rome; it was the Roman neglect (and pillage) that was chiefly responsible. For every destruction caused to Ireland by foreign invaders, much more was caused by internal Irish wars. More Jews were killed by each other than by the Romans during the Great Rebellion of 66–70 A.D., and so on. But in modern times, the romantic nationalists, who do not want to blame their own infatuated peoples and the tyrannical governments of the past which they consider "theirs" because the tyrants used their language, invent myths in which *all* the blame, instead of merely some less significant part of it, is ascribed solely to the foreign conquerors. Had more of the Arabs paid attention to what their own scholars were saying about the grim realities of the Abbasid Empire, or of other Islamic states of their past . . . their infatuation with the myth of their past, which was the basic cause of the Gulf war, would not have had such results. Incidentally, the right-wing Jews in Israel and many of the Jews in the U.S. suffer from the same disease which may cause similar results.

I probed further and found that Abbasid decline commencing in the ninth century can be traced at least in part to overexploitation of water-intensive agriculture, leading to salinization. The same thing now threatens the agriculture of California's Central Valley. It would be instructive to compare the effect of water subsidies in Abbasid Mesopotamia and in the region stretching south from Redding to the Salton Sea.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

In the realm of romantic nationalism nothing is more tragic than the spectacle of Pol Pot, in postwar Paris earnestly studying the fantasies of nineteenth-century French historians of the ancient Khmer civilization centered at Angkor Wat. They hypothesized an aquaculture of straight canals, and Pol Pot strove to revive these imaginary public works at a most horrible cost.

But I must reproach Shahak on his Irish history, suffused with nationalist fantasies though the country's history is. When Cromwell invaded Ireland (headquartering himself for a period in Youghal, the town in which I grew up), the consequent war, starvation and disease claimed some 620,000 people. In the Great Famine in the mid-nineteenth century, about a million Irish died due to the English landlord system and England's refusal to grant relief to meet the scale of the disaster. By contrast no more than 4,000 Irish died in the Civil War of the 1920s, and since then not more, relatively speaking, than a handful.

Look Before You Sit

I called my friend F. over the weekend to discuss once again the question of accidents. You may recall that it was while F. was driving across the Bay Bridge that a pigeon flew in his window and struck him on the side of the head. I reminded F. that our conclusion re accidents had been that they are normalcy raised to the level of drama.

I'm revising my idea of normalcy. All week long I had been pondering that much-discussed letter in *The New England Journal of Medicine* suggesting that, on the basis of a survey of some deaths in Southern California, left-handers had a mean life expectancy of 66. This meant me. Instead of being a white male in privileged circumstances looking toward an average stretch certainly not less than 75, I was now in the same boat as black men, who according to the latest survey from the government are ahead of the average if they get past their mid-60s.

I tried to figure how to beat the Reaper. This year I'm rounding the final curve toward my 50th birthday, but it seemed wise to plan ahead. The report suggested that lefties are particularly accident prone, since tin openers, corkscrews and slot machines are all designed for right-handers, otherwise known as ordinary long-lifers. Lefties also perish in traffic accidents because in emergencies they tend to yank the steering wheel down with their left hand and thus plunge under the wheels of the truck coming from the opposite direction. I practiced driving with my right hand, and yanking toward the ditch.

Filled with such thoughts and plans I approached, this past Saturday, a 1968 Dodge Dart GT I'd bought last summer that had been sitting in a canyon ten miles south of Carmel Highlands hard by the blue Pacific, left there for me by the previous owner. I unlocked it and, reminding myself to steer only with the right hand, swung down into the driver's seat.

At first I thought I'd sat on a bared spring. Then, aware that something seriously damaging had scythed its way into my left buttock, I looked down and saw a piece of glass lying on the seat. Half an hour later, trundled face down on a gurney into an emergency room in Monterey Community Hospital, I endured Dr. Keller's amiable badinage as he put several internal and twelve external stitches in my ass. This being the weekend of the Laguna Seco races, Dr. Keller was waiting for a tide of mangled bikers and regarded me as comic relief. Meanwhile, I was wondering. How had this substantial dagger of glass been wedged into the seat of the Dart? Had the previous owner left it there as a lagniappe? Did someone out there really hate me enough to have fixed the seat in this fashion, perhaps months ago, raptly anticipating the howl of anguish from a lonely canyon in the Santa Lucia Mountains?

I told Dr. Keller that this same night I was due to give a benefit talk in Santa Cruz in support of *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, the journal of ecology founded by Jim O'Connor. He advised me to do it sitting down, since if I stood all the blood would rush to my backside and I would probably slump forward over the rostrum. The talk went O.K., though afterward, hemmed in by a Christic fanatic, I found I was glued to my chair by seeping gore and had to submit to his remonstrations without hope of escape.

The next day I went back to the canyon. The glass on the Dart's seat twinkled and shone. It was mirror. The previous owner had installed one of those wraparound, multipane rearview mirrors you occasionally see in taxis. At some time between August 1990 and 5 P.M. Saturday, April 20, the left-hand pane had dropped out, bounced off the steering wheel and wedged a tip into the middle of the driver's seat. If it had lodged three inches to the right things would have been much worse. The man in the Graham Greene story who had to explain that his father had been killed by a pig falling off a balcony would have had nothing on me.

F. reminded me of his friend who, once in a while, would suspend all activity for ten seconds, just to throw predestination off track. Had I engineered my own fate by popping the trunk before I'd opened the driver's door? Maybe the thud of closing trunk lid had sprung the mirror free of its last patch of glue. And why was I opening the trunk? To put in the plates I'd just taken off the car, numbers 666, the sign of the Great Beast.

Tilted on my right buttock I drove north toward Watsonville. I was both behind and ahead of the game. After hearing report of my mishap, my brother Andrew in Washington reported a fresh letter in *The New England Journal*. It was from the American Academy of Actuaries, suggesting that the notorious stats on left-handed death were screwed up because the authors had ignored overall mortality rates, concentrating only on a finite number of deaths.

Coming over the hill and looking down into the Pajaro Valley and the wide fields surrounding Watsonville, I pulled over for sixty seconds, in hopes of throwing destiny off in whatever plans had been laid for me up the road. My ass hurt, but I was glad to have that lost decade back.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ D'Souza's Disclosures

Dinesh D'Souza has arrived. His book, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, is this season's *The Closing of the American Mind.* Conservatives have embraced his polemic against affirmative action, multicultural curriculum and the new bête noire of the right, political correctness. D'Souza, a smooth 29-year-old, is being hailed as the William F. Buckley of his generation. A recent *Washington Post* profile described this former White House policy wonk as "palpably smart," "sober-minded" and a "gentleman." I have a hard time associating such a characterization with the D'Souza I met nine years ago. At the time, he was on the staff of the right-wing, meanspirited *Dartmouth Review*, one among a group of editors who had published the notorious "jive" article, attacking affirmative action in stereotyped black "dialect." D'Souza still has to defend that decision on occasion, but he seems to have escaped the shadow of a more odious episode.

Back in 1982 I snuck into a conference for conservative student journalists held at the New York Athletic Club, where D'Souza was received as royalty. People were eager to talk about the *Review*'s publication the previous year of a confidential list of the members of Dartmouth's Gay Student Association as well as their personal letters. As a result of those exposures, some Dartmouth students had their sexual orientation disclosed to friends and family. At lunch D'Souza proudly confided to his tablemates, myself included, that his paper had obtained the material through a covert operation. He intimated that someone connected to the *Review* had gained access to the association's office and pinched the documents. The *Review*'s aim in this endeavor was plainly to make the lives of certain students miserable. Hardly the work of a gentleman and a scholar.

■ Gonzalez's Discovery

Henry Gonzalez is chipping away at a stone wall. For the past few months, the chair of the House Banking Committee has been investigating the scandal involving Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (B.N.L.). This Italian bank's Atlanta branch approved about $3 billion in unauthorized loans to Iraq prior to the war. Those loans, which were not reported to the Federal Reserve or the bank's headquarters in Rome, allowed Iraq to purchase chemicals, computers and technology that have military uses. The bank also financed the sale of $850 million in U.S. agricultural products to Iraq, with about $720 million of that guaranteed by the Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation. (Between 1983 and 1990 the C.C.C. provided $5 billion worth of credits to Iraq. Baghdad still owes $2 billion, part of which is in default.)

Gonzalez, who is examining the banking caper to discover what went wrong with the regulatory process, has found it hard to gather relevant material. When he asked Alan Greenspan at the Fed for documents relating to a Bank of Italy audit of B.N.L., Greenspan said no. The State Department also declined to turn over records related to the B.N.L. affair. The Treasury Department withheld minutes of the committee that approved the agriculture credits.

These elements in the Bush Administration are clearly disinclined to reveal the history of U.S. financial dealings with Iraq. Testimony before the Banking Committee demonstrates that the State Department and the Commerce Department were always eager to extend more credit to Iraq. As Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie often urged the Export-Import Bank to lend more money to Baghdad. Several U.S. corporations—including General Motors, Bechtel and General Electric—also frantically pressured the bank to squeeze out more taxpayer-backed credit for Iraq. Gonzalez is following a trail of immense greed.

He questions how U.S. intelligence could have missed both the transfer of technology to Iraq and the B.N.L. scandal. After all, thousands of telexes flowed between B.N.L. and Iraqi government agencies concerning military-related projects in Iraq. For conspiracy theorists, there's more. The consulting board of B.N.L., which is owned by the Italian government, boasts Henry Kissinger, David Rockefeller and other members of the Trilateral Commission. (Before the war Kissinger Associates had an informal relationship with the U.S.-Iraq Business Forum.) The Banking Committee is also looking into another intriguing connection. In 1989 there was a series of money transfers between B.N.L.-Atlanta and the scandal-ridden Bank of Credit and Commerce International, which laundered money for Manuel Noriega and secretly took over the Washington-based First American Bank. Much appears to be at stake, so it's no surprise Gonzalez must resort to subpoenas to find the truth about B.N.L.

■ Powell's Declaration of Independence

Will President Bush boot Dan Quayle off the ticket and replace him with a non-Republican? He will if he follows the advice of those pundits and political strategists who suggest he enlist Gen. Colin Powell for the 1992 G.O.P. ticket. Powell, the star of Desert Storm, is not a fellow Republican, according to his voter registration card. In 1986 the general and his wife, Alma, registered in the Bronx as independents. His Bronx registration is a bit puzzling, though. Powell grew up in the Bronx, but he did not join the voter rolls there as a young man and he hasn't lived in the area since he entered the Army in 1958. If he registered elsewhere—as a member of the military, he is allowed to sign up as a voter wherever he is stationed and then keep his registration in that place, even if transferred—why shift to New York? Perhaps he was thinking of a political career and saw New York State as the right staging ground. One Bronx elections official said the record suggests that Powell had never registered before 1986, but since information is missing from his registration card, a definitive reading is not possible. His file does show that he voted in 1986, 1988 and 1990; Alma was AWOL during those elections. The Pentagon refuses to clarify whether Powell, prior to 1986, was missing in action as a voter.

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

Has there ever been a moment since the end of World War II when so many people worldwide were desperately fleeing terror?

It is not only the flight from Iraq of well over a million Kurds, Shiites and other opponents of Saddam Hussein. Unfortunately, while the horror of their situation rightly rivets our attention, the disasters unfolding elsewhere in the world are being obscured. In the circumstances, it is even more difficult to generate the pressure on governments to curb the abuses that drive people—that is, those who survive—to abandon their homes and communities for the misery of displacement or of life in a refugee camp. Similarly, arousing the humanitarian response needed to ease the plight of those escaping terror is all the more difficult when world attention is focused on another crisis.

In the Iraqi case, though the numbers that have been used in various accounts differ, it seems that up to 50,000 people have made their way to those parts of southern Iraq occupied by U.S. and Saudi forces. Now that a peace agreement has been reached, they are being consigned to camps in a demilitarized zone in southern Iraq. They are unable to sustain themselves in such arid territory and are thus dependent on charity.

What is to become of them? Will they supplement the force of Iraqi military defectors allegedly being created in Saudi Arabia (call them the *contras*)? In *The Washington Post* on April 10, David Ottaway attributed to unnamed Iraqi opposition leaders the claim that "between 20,000 and 30,000 Iraqi POWs may be receiving training in camps" in Saudi Arabia. Speculation that such a force was being created has been around for several weeks, but hard evidence is still missing. Ottaway's account lacked details that could be checked; nevertheless, it is a story worth pursuing. Unhappily, the fate of the Iraqis who sought safety in areas under U.S. and Saudi control, like that of their compatriots who fled toward the Turkish border, may be governed mainly by geopolitical considerations. So far—as my colleague Eric Goldstein of Middle East Watch confirmed when he telephoned me on April 21 from Paveh on the Iran-Iraq border, where about 120,000 Kurds have gathered—it is the Iranians who stand out for their humanitarian response to the plight of the refugees.

Among many disasters elsewhere—the Liberian war, the escalating wars in three regions of India (Assam, Punjab and Kashmir), the long-running conflicts that have devastated Afghanistan, Angola, Burma, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and several other countries—the one that currently accounts for death and flight on a scale comparable to that in Iraq is taking place in the Horn of Africa. Of course, it is misleading to call this cataclysm the result of *one* conflict because several wars are being fought in the three principal countries of the Horn: Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. What they share is the legacy of exploitation by external powers compounding, if not creating, the present disasters.

Recently, while glancing through David Lamb's book *The Africans*, published nearly a decade ago, I came across this prescient passage about Ethiopia and Somalia:

> Washington's closest African ally [Ethiopia] was now a Soviet satellite and Moscow's African stepchild [Somalia] was under the tutelage of the United States. Ethiopia and Somalia had put themselves on the open market and sold their allegiances to the highest bidder with the best deal. One day, no doubt, the arrangement will come unhinged and the loyalties will change again.

When the Soviet Union lost both the ambition and the wherewithal to maintain an African empire, Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia sought buyers elsewhere and sold the Falashas (Ethiopian Jews) to Israel. In return, he got military aid and training. He sold Ethiopia's vote on the Security Council to the United States in support of the war against Iraq and got U.S. nonobstruction of World Bank loans in return. The weapons, training and money help to stave off defeat by rebel forces. The desperate Mengistu has now closed the secondary schools, conscripted the students and imprisoned prominent citizens in the Eritrean city of Asmara as hostages. As has been his practice, in March he blocked food relief to rebel-controlled towns in an attempt to starve their civilian supporters. Mengistu may not hold on much longer, but he will take as many people as he can with him to the grave.

In Somalia, the United States spent a decade propping up the brutal regime of President Mohammed Siad Barre until a little more than a year ago, when documented accounts of his human rights abuses made continued U.S. support politically impossible. Since then, Siad Barre's government has collapsed. By the time he fell in January, the country was disintegrating, and the factional fighting makes it possible that Somalia will not survive as a nation. The carnage is incalculable. In 1989 more than 300,000 Somalis fled to Ethiopia in just a few weeks. Now additional hundreds of thousands are fleeing, principally to Ethiopia and Kenya, where their circumstances are dire.

In Sudan, the long-predicted famine is setting in and millions are at risk of starvation; a cruel war, marked by massacres of noncombatants, continues unabated; and the regime of Lieut. Gen. Omar al-Bashir has demonstrated its intent to implement a draconian version of Islamic law, which has been a major factor in the conflict with the country's large non-Muslim population. United States support, once strong, has vanished since Bashir aligned Sudan with Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait.

The United States and its allies readily came up with billions for the war against Iraq; now they have little to spare for those trying to escape from Saddam. Similarly, money was no object when it bought the fealty of the dictators of the Horn; now there are only pennies for their victims. Although generous humanitarian intervention hardly constitutes recompense for those whose suffering is attributable to the dictators who formerly enjoyed our government's munificence, it is the least that is required.

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ARTICLES.

GLITZ! VISUALS! ACTION!

The Whole World Is Watching CNN

JAY ROSEN

The bus shelter ads say, "CNN: NOW MORE THAN EVER." They have a point. Indispensable and omnipresent during the gulf war, Ted Turner's Cable News Network now looks to be the future of TV news. But what kind of future will it be? The answer depends on which of its many identities CNN is inhabiting at a given time (or place).

For Americans with cable, CNN serves as a video wire service, offering constant updates on the news. It's also an instant delivery system for dramatic footage from around the globe. In a crisis it becomes a kind of video bulletin board where key players can post messages to one another in full view of the world. With its growing international presence, especially in the environments traveled by powerful elites, CNN represents a new dimension of an emerging global culture that is already heavily Americanized. And in countries where the media are still government controlled, CNN offers an image of an open society—modeled, of course, on the commercial aesthetic of American TV.

Any reckoning with CNN must begin with the reasons for its rise, first in the United States and then internationally. The essence of CNN is that it is a twenty-four-hour *news* network, meaning that within the organization there is no other competing programming. By giving its undivided attention to news, CNN gains a large advantage over the news divisions of the three major networks, which are just that—divisions within an increasingly hostile corporate climate, where there's constant pressure to cut costs. CNN is now ready to accomplish in news what the Hollywood movie studios have done in entertainment—parlay the huge U.S. market into a revenue source that can fund the leap into an even larger international market. It is now in the process of executing this strategy, but the networks, with far more experience in the news business, are closing bureaus and trimming staff.

As a global news service CNN will soon have competition—from the BBC, for example—but none of its international rivals will be able to count on the two income streams CNN enjoys in the United States: cable fees and advertising revenues. Whether Turner continues to own it (there are rumors of a Time-Warner takeover), CNN is here to stay, and not only here but abroad as well. In one form or another, it reaches more than 100 countries; it has agreements to share footage with broadcasting agencies all over the world. It *is* the global village, as Marshall McLuhan is reported to have told Turner.

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During the gulf war, CNN's triumph became clear to everyone. It achieved its highest-ever U.S. ratings, ranging from 4.7 million to 10.9 million homes in prime-time hours (compared with fewer than 930,000 before the crisis). The networks also saw their ratings jump during the war, but not their revenues. For them, war coverage cut into prime-time hours normally reserved for entertainment shows; the advertisers didn't like it and refused to buy ads. War news, they said, was not the right "environment." Given the gravity of events in the gulf and the high ratings their own coverage was getting, ABC, NBC and CBS had no choice but to stick with their news divisions, even though they were losing millions of dollars a day in canceled ads. After the war, a new round of budget cuts, which executives justified by the costs of war coverage, hit CBS News.

CNN, meanwhile, was not only keeping advertisers but raising its rates, from $3,500 before the war to more than $20,000 for a thirty-second spot. This underlines the essential advantage the network enjoys: Those who watch are watching it specifically for news; those who advertise on CNN have already decided they are willing to advertise on the news. The result is that CNN, despite its lower ratings, can invest more in news gathering than any of its competitors, a gap that is certain to grow given the networks' financial losses during the war. ABC now has twelve foreign bureaus, NBC thirteen and CBS seven. CNN has fifteen, with more to come.

On the first night of the war, CNN stunned the rest of the news business by maintaining a phone link into Baghdad as the bombs began dropping. While CNN's correspondents gave us their version of the U.S. bombing raid, the networks witnessed a vivid sign of their own demise. About 200 local stations that had agreements with CNN switched to the cable network's war coverage, including many network affiliates that would ordinarily be carrying Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw or Peter Jennings. In Los Angeles CNN was on all four independent stations, in New York it was on three. We got a sudden glimpse of the future: Local stations will retain their own highly profitable news operations and rely on CNN for national or international news. Who needs Rather, Brokaw and Jennings?

CNN feels it doesn't. Up to now, it has refused to create what is known in the trade as "anchor monsters," with their outsized egos and outrageous salaries. This is part of Turner's strategy of producing the news at lower cost and spreading those costs over twenty-four hours of programming. Of course, the costs are lower relative only to the U.S. networks. In comparison with the toned-down atmosphere of TV news in other countries, CNN looks rich, glitzy, exciting, "American." The pricey anchors may be absent, but the zooming graphics, high-tech feel and picture-driven pace of a network newscast are important features of CNN. This makes it another vehicle for the spread of American

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values, disguised this time as production values.

Here, too, the parallel with the Hollywood studios holds. Against the calculated slickness and thrill-a-minute action of the big-budget Hollywood feature, the filmmakers of other nations have a hard time competing. The same kind of competition is already occurring in news, as the polished look and up-tempo pace of CNN force home-grown broadcasters in Europe to adopt similar techniques. As CNN producer Bob Furnad told the *Los Angeles Times* last year, "We live in an environment where people are watching a channel for three minutes and then pressing that clicker. We've got to get them watching and keep them watching."

Political deeds that lack a visual dimension may tend to escape world notice because they bore the image-hungry producers at CNN.

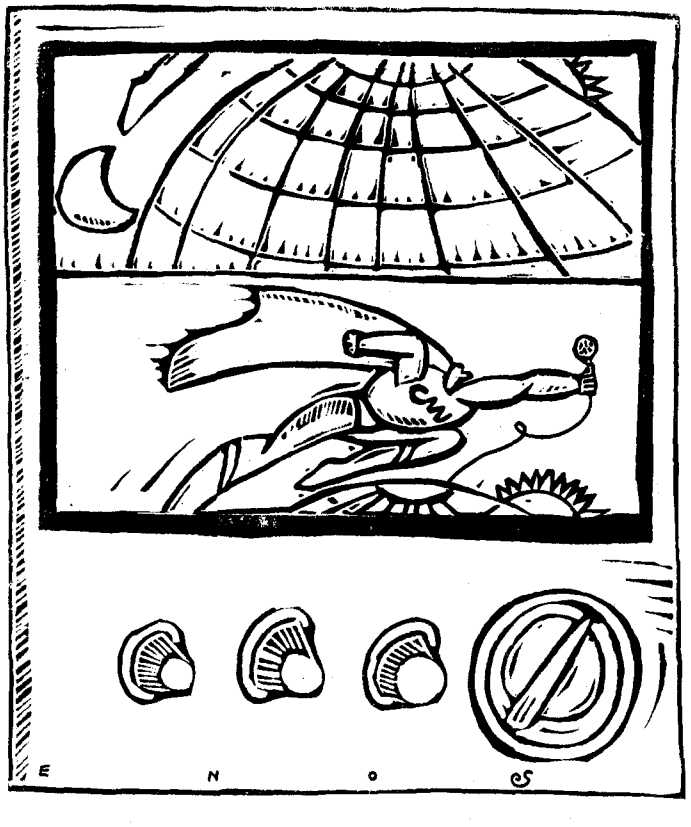
The ethic of "get them watching and keep them watching" is born of the American experience of competing for ratings in a multichannel commercial system. It is an attitude toward the audience, a manipulative way of viewing others, that is highly developed in the U.S. media but still underdeveloped abroad. In setting out to equalize this differential, CNN evinces a one-worldism that is considerably less admirable than Turner's well-publicized concern for the environment and world peace. The one world implied by the production values of CNN is one in which the viewer's attention can be held in the same manner everywhere: with dramatic visuals deployed for their oomph value rather than their importance in any explanatory scheme.

This frenzy of the visual, in which U.S. television has long specialized, has political consequences, but no politics per se. In the gulf war, for example, it worked to the advantage of the U.S. military in favoring repeated showings of laser-guided missiles hitting their targets squarely and spectacularly. But it also dictated that CNN would show scenes of what Iraq said was a civilian shelter destroyed by allied bombs. It would be wrong to suggest that CNN has no politics: It acts in an explicitly political manner when it shows defiance in the face of any attempt to prevent it from airing the footage it wants to broadcast. Thus the live coverage it sent from Beijing in the spring of 1989, when Chinese officials were seen ordering the network to shut down its signal.

We can also expect more arresting irrelevance, like the coverage via satellite of American crews extinguishing oil fires in Kuwait. CNN carried it live on April 10, essentially because it was promotable on the air April 9. It's significant that prior to the gulf war, CNN's biggest ratings included its live coverage of the 1987 rescue of a baby trapped in a Texas well and the 1989 San Francisco earthquake. This fetishizing of the live may seem harmless, but when the next baby—or trapped whale—captivates the whole world rather than the nation, the power to create global distractions will perhaps draw greater scrutiny. Of course, the same power can (and no doubt will) be used to focus worldwide attention on various government atrocities and political crimes, as long as they are highly visual and available to the cameras. Any rumbling of tanks into city streets, as in Tiananmen Square, will be costly to the government involved.

As CNN begins to constitute—rather than merely inform—the global public sphere, its limitations will become global as well. Political deeds that lack a visual dimension may tend to escape world notice because they bore the image-hungry producers at CNN (or its competitors). Consider in this connection the savings and loan scandal and other complex maneuvers of finance; they occur in a political field that is fundamentally nonvisual and thus of negligible interest to those whose task is to "get them watching and keep them watching." It's not that the facts of such scandals are suppressed, but they are relegated to financial news segments and therefore escape the continuous cycles of repetition that are the essence of the CNN style.

Still, it would be wrong to assume that CNN is entirely or even predominantly a malignant influence. There are several ways in which its approach to news is a progressive one. For example, its preference for live coverage means that it will often carry important news conferences, announcements and hearings in their entirety, avoiding the tyranny of the soundbite and the TV reporter's breezy, overly facile wrap-up. Granted, what CNN considers "important" is likely to involve government officials, but there's still a net gain for viewers, who can watch, listen and decide for themselves what they think. Similarly, the refusal to build up the on-



ILLUSTRATIONS BY RANDALL ENOS

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One-Way Radio

America broadcasts to all corners of the globe. In recent discussions of the Persian Gulf war, we have ignored the international dimension of broadcasting and the consequent role that American news plays in Iraq and the gulf countries. CNN has received the most attention, as a result of its expanded role in the gulf war, when it was widely watched in the Arab world and, more controversially, when it relayed Saddam Hussein's words directly to the American people.

But the cheapest and most extensive way in which the United States speaks to the world is through radio. Throughout the gulf war the Voice of America pumped out all-news shows to the Middle East for fifteen hours a day in Arabic and for eighteen hours a day in English. People can tune in to the V.O.A. in Baghdad while they cook, shave or drive to work. They can pick it up on cheap, battery-run receivers and listen to shows relayed through Greece. Those who have an FM radio can hear the V.O.A. from Dhahran.

In Iraq, news is government controlled, as it is throughout the gulf region. The political and intellectual elite, and countless others as well, listen to a very wide spectrum of international radio broadcasters. They tune in stations from the BBC to Radio Moscow, from Kol Israel to the Voice of Palestine. They pay attention to France's Radio Monte Carlo, Germany's Deutsche Welle—and to the Voice of America.

Radio, unlike print, knows no boundaries, and its signal is unstoppable. Jamming international broadcasts is expensive because it requires enormous electrical power, and it is never completely effective. Last August 3, Iraq began jamming the Voice of America; by September 26 it had given up. Arab countries monitor the V.O.A. (along with all other international stations) and issue daily booklets of excerpts to their own press. Although subject to censorship, overseas newspapers and radio stations employ the V.O.A. as a wire service.

People listen. After the gulf crisis started, according to a BBC survey, the number of Egyptians who listened to the V.O.A. rose from 1 percent to 11 percent of the local listening audience. In Saudi Arabia 13 percent of the audience tuned in to the V.O.A. Among the political elite, we can assume that a much higher proportion listen. When ABC anchor Peter Jennings conducted his interview with Saddam Hussein on November 16, 1990, his interpreter interjected that another 100,000 American soldiers were on their way to the gulf. Saddam immediately corrected him, doubling the figure. The Iraqi leader had come to the interview directly from listening to the Voice of America.

Although Saddam and many other Iraqis listen to the V.O.A., how many Americans have ever heard of, not to mention heard, Radio Baghdad? It has regularly broadcast to North America for two hours a day in English; it transmits programs in Arabic as well. But few Americans bother to listen to shortwave at any time, even to the BBC. When Iraq's electrical transmitter ceased operating, English-language broadcasts of Radio Baghdad also ended. George Bush receives monitored reports about the station and is briefed on it by military intelligence and the C.I.A., but he never tuned in to Radio Baghdad himself.

International broadcasting is in general a one-way flow. While it is true that people in the Arab nations listen to one another's radio stations, Western countries usually broadcast to the less-developed countries, not the other way around. This means that a leader like Saddam cannot seal off the people of Iraq from news of the war or news of the world. But it also means he cannot make his own voice heard abroad.

That is why demonstrators around the world carry placards written in English for television cameras sending footage to American audiences. Their only way of communicating to foreign peoples and governments is through the Western media. With the rise of CNN and the growth of American media domination of international broadcasting, that imbalance has become all the more evident—and frustrating.

Saddam needed to use the American media to talk to the American people—and, once the channels of diplomacy had shut down, to the American government. This is not to say that Peter Arnett was wrong to stay in Baghdad and report what he saw. But the furor in the United States over whether he was being used as an instrument of Iraqi propaganda must be viewed in the context of the dilemma in which every Third World nation finds itself: America can talk to them and to their people, but they cannot reach us. It is only by looking at the Arnett case from the viewpoint of American-news-as-cultural-hegemony that we can understand fully the meaning of his broadcasts.

Third World nations will continue to listen to foreign radio, including the Voice of America. CNN will grow in international importance in the coming years, bombarding the world with American news from an American perspective. As international broadcasting increasingly facilitates Western hegemony, the sense of media impotence and the resultant political anger already felt in the less-developed nations of the world will expand accordingly. Until we become aware of the nature of the problem, we will not understand why Third World nations try to use our broadcasters as a channel of communication to the United States. Americans rarely think about the media in international terms, but we must learn to do so.

HOLLY COWAN SHULMAN

Holly Cowan Shulman teaches American history at the University of Maryland and is the author of The Voice of America *(University of Wisconsin).*

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air people as stars has a welcome effect: They're not tempted to appoint themselves Secretary of State, as Ted Koppel is inclined to do.

In general, the fact that CNN is on all the time reduces the pressure on any particular half-hour to perform in the ratings, which means that the people on air don't have to blow-dry themselves to perfection or edit out every trace of reality's messiness. Among network news traditionalists, CNN is often said to lack "depth." But in a tradition where "depth" means five minutes for a complex subject rather than two, the charge is hard to take seriously. For a standard thirty-minute newscast, CNN is similar enough to the networks to substitute for them, which it is doing and will continue to do.

CNN's shrewdest move to date has been to target the international elite, those who are involved in the news as actors more than audiences. In newsrooms, international airports, foreign ministries and financial houses around the world, CNN is left on all the time, becoming the medium of record for people whose business it is to monitor the globe. For hotels that cater to international elites, CNN is also a must. It is this elite viewer, more than any mass audience in foreign countries, who gives CNN a potent international presence. In Iraq during the war, CNN was received by satellite, but only by a handful of government offices that could bear the expense of rooftop dishes. Saddam Hussein could watch, but not most Iraqis. This international presence gives CNN the cachet it needs to capture interviews with world leaders and key announcements from the players in a crisis. These can be aired in real time, making the network even more valuable to political actors. That is why desk officers at foreign ministries assign someone to watch CNN around the clock.

In countries where television and the press have been rigidly controlled, there is little doubt that the arrival of CNN means a freeing-up of the media system. Solidarity knew what it was doing in the mid-1980s when it got the Polish authorities to concede a half-hour of CNN on the nightly government newscast. Similarly, opponents of the ruling party in Mexico credit CNN's presence with making it harder for the government to manipulate voting results. For U.S. viewers, there's the fact that CNN is more likely to give "outlaw" leaders like Saddam and Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi a chance to be heard. The reason, of course, is more economic than political. If you've got twenty-four hours a day to fill, why not let Qaddafi have his say?

In its often sloppy, seat-of-the-pants reporting during the gulf war, and in presenting Peter Arnett's censored reports from Baghdad, CNN showed a tendency to shift the editing function toward the audience. The right to sort through information and discount what some people say was removed from TV producers and given to viewers. That's progress, at least on my ledger. What isn't progressive about CNN is the implicit nihilism of picture-driven news and the "keep 'em watching" mentality. In these respects, Turner's triumph will do more for the spread of TV culture than for the cultivation of intelligent citizenship around the globe. But CNN bears watching, if for no other reason than that a good portion of the world is likely to be watching it too. □

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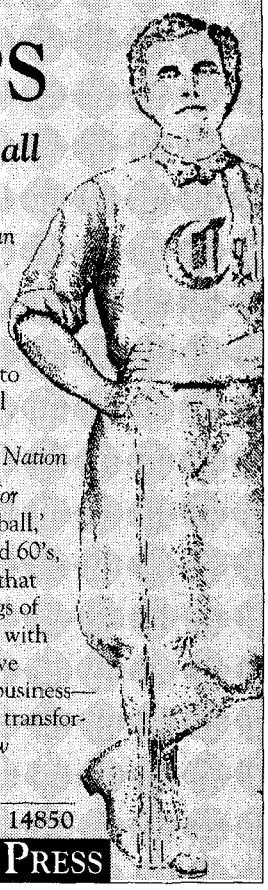

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BEYOND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Turning On Youth to Politics

HARRY C. BOYTE

Studies by the Times Mirror Center ("The Age of Indifference") and others purport to reveal that today's teenagers and young adults view politics with nearly universal hatred and express apathy toward public affairs generally. A little more probing uncovers a more complex set of attitudes. Allan Moyle's film *Pump Up the Volume*, based in part on workshops with teenagers in New York, reveals a generation not so much apathetic as disgusted with adult hypocrisy, furious at adults' apparent inaction on mounting social problems, cynical about 1960s-style protest and uncertain about what else there is to do. But it is clear enough that civics classes, weekend senior trips to Washington and simple exhortations to be "good citizens"—the stuff of political education for earlier generations—are not going to do much to interest young people in the political world.

Into this breach has come youth community service. Its advocates claim that voluntary service prepares a self-centered, materialistic generation for citizenship through cultivating a civic concern for others. Thus, one recent major report on young people, the Grant Commission's 1988 study, "Youth and America's Future," argued that "if the service commitment begins early enough and continues into adulthood, participatory citizenship would become . . . 'habits of the heart,' family and community traditions of local political participation that sustain a person, a community and a nation." The term "community service" is generally used to refer to individual voluntary efforts: tutoring; working in food shelters, adult literacy programs, nursing homes or hospitals; programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. It is a growing movement.

A handful of Ivy League college and university presidents organized the Campus Compact in November 1985 to stimulate voluntary community service. By 1987, 259 campuses were involved. The city of Detroit passed a requirement of 200 hours of community service for graduation from high school; Atlanta issued a seventy-five-hour minimum requirement "in an effort to enhance students' understanding of the obligations of a good citizen." Springfield, Massachusetts, made service part of the curriculum from kindergarten through high school. In Washington a bipartisan consensus, stretching from Edward Kennedy to George Bush, passed the Community Service Act of 1990, which provides a mechanism for federal funding of community service projects through public schools and volunteer organizations.

Community service can make important contributions to education through exposure to other cultures, experiential learning and personal growth. In reality, however, service does little to interest students in politics or teach citizenship.

Service is like a generational ink-blot test: How one views it depends on one's politically formative experiences. Older adults across the political spectrum believe that service involvements will revive the kind of political idealism that puts aside self-interest in the pursuit of a larger cause or the common good. Such hopes grow from memories of the idealistic ambience of their own youth. For the right, community service recalls the unambiguous patriotism of the 1950s, when the "Free World" battled countries behind the "Iron Curtain" and the United States was the unique repository of moral rectitude. For the left, community service aims at restoring the idealism of civil rights and antiwar protesters who went into nonviolent combat against segregationists in the South or military recruiters on campus. William F. Buckley and Jesse Jackson may disagree about which ideals community service should cultivate, but both see service as a way of generating altruistic concern.

Community service has a different meaning for young people, however. Steven Conn, a recent college graduate, summarized his generation's views in an open-letter response to Buckley's call for national service: "Many of us in the twentysomething crowd feel we are being bequeathed a colossal mess."

Today's youth see service as an *alternative* to moralized politics and citizenship as normally understood by left or right. Service involvements offer opportunities for real-life experiences that are down-to-earth, serious and immediately relevant to people's lives. This appeals to young people who have grown cynical about hortatory political rhetoric of any sort.

While college presidents were forming Campus Compact and school systems were instituting service requirements, young adults were creating their own service movement. The most dramatic story is that of the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), launched in 1984 by a group of recent college graduates to provide encouragement and technical assistance for youth-initiated service programs. When co-founder Wayne Meisel began a 1,500-mile trek starting in Maine and ending up in Washington, D.C., to help spark community service projects on campuses, he found little volunteer activity of any kind. Six years later, COOL was at the center of a vital and expanding national network, with 600 campuses involved and almost 1,500 students attending its annual conference last year at U.C.L.A.

Far from seeing its purpose as reviving youthful citizenship or political idealism, COOL was from the beginning overtly apolitical. Indeed, it billed itself as an explicit alternative to the political wars on campus between right and left. Meisel depicted the service movement as aimed at the "silent majority" on campuses, between "knee-jerk liberals" on the left and "jerks" on the right.

To younger Americans, repudiation of self-interest sounds disingenuous in a world that trumpets the life styles of the rich and famous and praises the virtues of free enterprise. From its inception COOL stressed benefits that students receive from service involvements. "Self-interest, readily understood, is a win-win deal," said Meisel. "This whole movement

Harry C. Boyte is a senior fellow at the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and director of Project Public Life.

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is about linking complementary needs." Behind such sentiments lies a palpable hunger for community on the part of a generation that has seen the family disintegrate and neighborhoods torn apart by racial discord. Volunteers focus on concrete tasks, disavowing sweeping political or social reconstruction. "I do community service for myself," said one woman at a North Carolina college who began a mentoring program for pregnant teens. "I have a passion for it. I can't save the world."

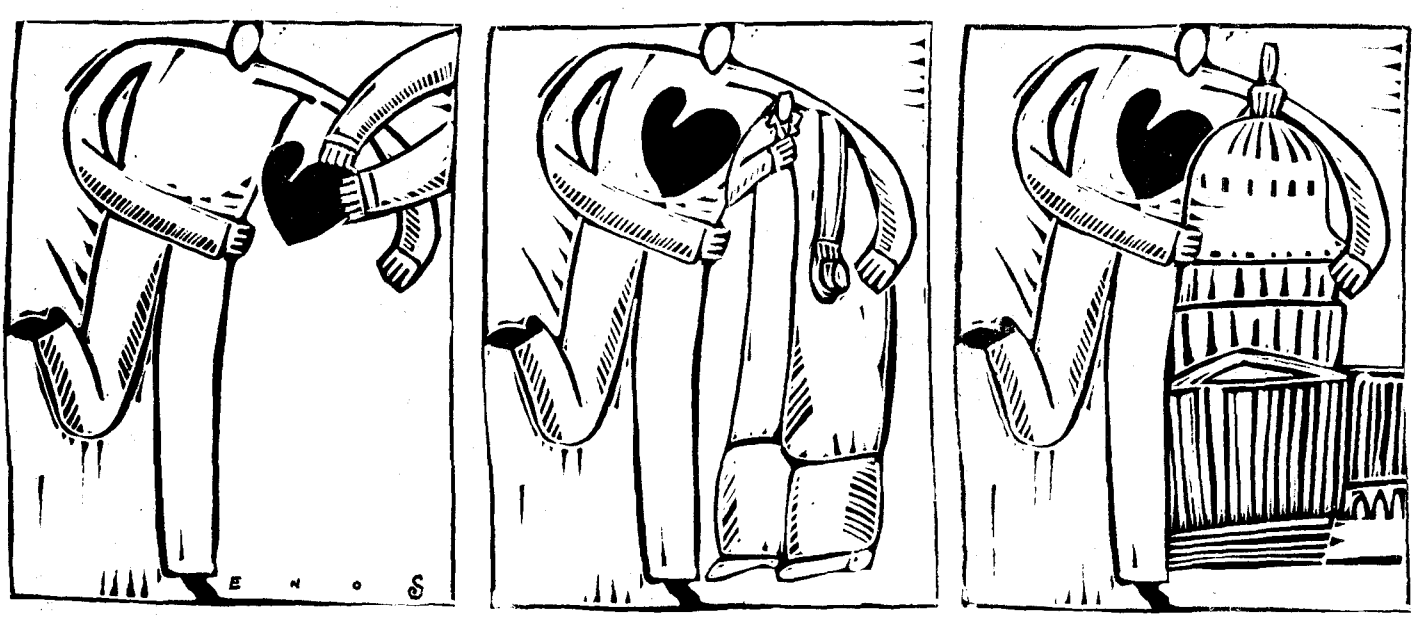
However, the absence of a broader vocabulary of politics that draws attention to the public realm has problematic consequences. Most service programs include little learning or discussion about the policy dimensions of the "issues" (such as poverty, homelessness, drug use, illiteracy) that students wrestle with through person-to-person effort. Volunteers—usually middle-class and generally white—rarely have occasion to reflect on the complex dynamics of power, race and class that are created when young people go out to "serve" in low-income areas.

Moreover, absent a vocabulary of public politics, community service adopts the therapeutic language of personal development that now pervades society. From TV talk shows to Congressional debates, terms and concepts like accountability, respect for public contribution, negotiation and recognition of honest differences have been replaced by a therapeutic vocabulary of personal intimacy. This has strengths within communities of friendship. But it assumes sameness—"we all have the same feelings under the skin, after all"—and blurs racial, ethnic, economic and religious differences. It also obscures questions of power and accountability. Marion Barry appealed for personal sympathy when questioned about drug abuse; Senator David Durenberger told voters in Minnesota that he felt cut off from his friends in the Senate as a result of exposure of his misdeeds.

In community service, a similar emphasis on feelings and personal expressiveness is at work. In high schools, for example, most curriculums for community service stress personal growth. A representative listing of the learning objectives in youth service elaborates goals like "self-esteem," "a sense of personal worth," "self-understanding," "independence," "personal belief in the ability to make a difference," "consciousness about one's personal values," "openness to new experiences," "capacity to persevere in difficult tasks," "exploration of new identities and unfamiliar roles" and "skills in caring for others." Politics was entirely absent. Campus service projects are similarly suffused with a personalized language. Campus programs have names like GIVE; Project LOVE; Si, Se Puede ("Yes, You Can," a high school program at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts); and HOT (Helping Others Today). COOL's logo consists of hands reaching out to mend torn hearts.

There are signs of growing restiveness with such excessively apolitical language. In *Pump Up the Volume* Christian Slater, playing a high school student who creates an underground radio persona named Harry Hard-On, exposes the psychobabble of the guidance counselor and his "full array of counseling resources" as a cover for the school administration's heavy-handedness, deceit and incompetence. In COOL, behind the posture of apoliticism there has been a slow process of political self-definition for a generation distinguishing itself from the 1960s and convinced it does not need much more "consciousness raising." Since they entered school, teenagers and young adults have heard from parents and teachers—1960s veterans, after all—an unremitting litany of problems, crises and disasters facing American society, from poverty to pollution, from racism to falling S.A.T. scores. What they haven't heard is what is actually being done to solve those problems. The real-world experience of dealing with diverse environments has prompted within COOL a desire for practical knowledge about what can be done. Over the past year, the organization has begun to develop curricular materials addressing questions of policy, power and politics.

A different way to teach politics is essential if we want to encourage teens and young adults to assume the full responsibilities of citizenship, that is, a significant role in public affairs. Partly, this means retrieving older definitions. The word "politics" comes from the Greek *politikos*, meaning "of a cit-



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izen." A citizen-centered politics re-creates the concept of a public realm, different from private life, in which diverse groups learn to work together effectively to address public problems, whether or not they like one another personally or agree on other issues. Politics, to be meaningful, also requires an *experience of power.*

Project Public Life at the University of Minnesota's Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, which has worked with COOL in developing materials and training for groups to use in political debates and education, has found that teenagers also respond well to a "problem-solving politics" in which they take on roles as important actors. The Public Achievement program of Project Public Life, co-sponsored with St. Paul Mayor Jim Scheibel, Minnesota 4-H and others, is based on a pedagogy in which young people define their own goals and have the space to work on them. Issues sometimes resemble those dealt with by community service, such as concern about the environment. More often, Public Achievement's emphasis on teens' identification of issues in which they have a direct stake leads to projects that explicitly raise questions of power and that address problems close to home, like day care for unwed mothers, relations between school officials and students, and racial conflict among teens. Public Achievement regularly brings together different teams of teenagers in public environments where they learn how to work practically across racial and class lines.

Participants clearly distinguish this experience from community service and other conventional educational activities. "I thought politics meant politicians lying on TV," says one student. "I hated it. Now we've lived out a whole new meaning of politics." Another student, Mary Brennan, from St. Bernard school, says, "It feels good to be able to show what you can do without the shelter of adults. I learned I have a lot of talents that I haven't been using."

Young people come into the world with no special knowledge about politics; political skills and arts are learned, like basketball or music. The goal of civic education should be to provide young people with hands-on public experience, with opportunities to practice political skills like strategic thinking, bargaining, negotiation, listening, argument, problem solving and evaluation. It should teach both the rewards and the effectiveness of politics. This also requires a process of systematic reflection on the nature of public life and key political concepts like power, accountability and interests.

Such an approach is a significant shift from conventional community service. Service as practiced today is important, but its language of caring and community is no antidote for youthful cynicism about politics, and its predominantly one-on-one character leaves little room for political learning.

As this generation defines itself politically, it is likely to focus less on altruism, protest or flag-waving than on finding practical answers to the critical problems of the nation. We badly need this kind of pragmatic populism, in which citizens have far more power, authority and responsibility than they do as sentimentalized "points of light." The end of the gulf war has left America with an even larger mess, which only politically active citizens can solve. □

F.B.I. Men

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

He has yet to be granted a new trial, despite court findings that the government withheld evidence favorable to him that "casts a strong doubt on the government's case."* In the past year, my own belief that Peltier is innocent has been strengthened by different evidence altogether.

On February 17, 1990, in a small house in the Pacific Northwest, I was talking with Peltier's cousin Bob Robideau when he lifted his gaze to acknowledge someone behind me who had quietly entered the room. A small, husky figure passed us without a word and slipped into a chair against the wall. The man was faceless in a dark blue woolen hood pulled all the way down to the collar of a black windbreaker. Opaque black glasses covered his eyes and black gloves hid his hands; excepting a long strand of raven hair that fell from beneath the hood, the only parts of him that were exposed were his nose and a small line of brown-olive skin bared at the wrist. It was this man who, on June 26, 1975, killed F.B.I. agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

In the summer of 1988, disturbed that Leonard Peltier had already spent thirteen years in prison for the agents' killings, with no end in sight, "X" had come to Robideau and offered the latter permission to name him as the killer to the F.B.I. However, he said, he felt no guilt and did not believe he deserved to go to prison, and if subpoenaed would deny that he had done it. Robideau might have agreed to this proposal if he'd thought it would help Peltier, but he knew that Leonard's conviction for "aiding and abetting" would not be overturned even if the authorities could be convinced that another man had pulled the trigger. I asked Bob how he could be so sure that this man was not lying, and Bob said simply, "I saw him do it." Robideau, Peltier and Darrelle (Dino) Butler had known for fifteen years who killed the agents, but because X had been on a mission for the AIM group on that hot June day, and because the F.B.I. agents had provoked the fatal shootout, they agreed with X that no crime had been committed. (Robideau and Butler were acquitted in a separate trial.)

In a deep whispery voice—the hood looked bulked by something wrapped around his mouth—X told me how Peltier and Butler had requested that he bring explosives from Rapid City to their camp for use in making hand grenades and other weapons. ("We learned at Wounded Knee," he said, referring to the armed standoff between AIM and the government two years earlier, "that explosives keep 'em at a respectful dis-

* A petition for a writ of habeas corpus, based on the government's admission that it doesn't know who shot the two agents, was filed last December.

—The Editors

Peter Matthiessen is the author of many books, including, most recently, Killing Mister Watson *(Random House). This article is adapted from the new epilogue to* In the Spirit of Crazy Horse *(Viking), being republished this month after an eight-year legal battle that kept it from circulation.*

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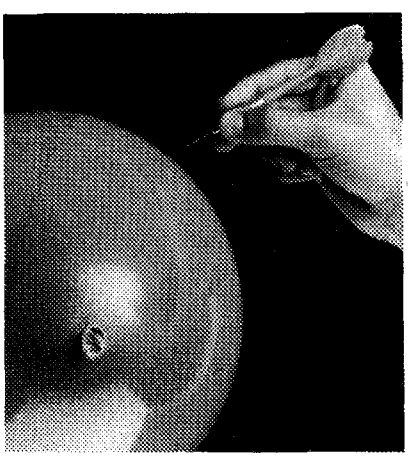

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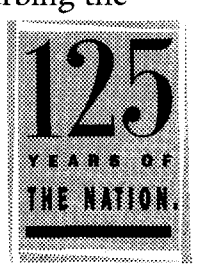

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tance.") On the morning of June 26, with the explosives loaded into a friend's pickup truck, he headed south, then east across the reservation. As they passed the large water tank at Oglala Housing, they noticed two late-model cars that turned onto the country road and followed them eastward toward the Jumping Bull farm. X and his partner turned off into the westernmost of the several long dirt roads onto the property, and as they neared June Little's cabin, they saw the two strange cars turn off and follow them onto the farm—no longer a working farm but a group of shacks and cabins strung out along a bluff that overlooks a lower pasture and corral and thick woods leading down to White Clay Creek.

Seeing the cars, X and his partner waved to June Little and kept going, following a grass track over the bluff and down the hill into the pasture and uphill again to a Y fork in the farm road. There they stopped, not wishing to lead the unknown cars down to the AIM camp in the river woods or back uphill into the Jumping Bull community off to the east of the Little cabin. "We were naturally apprehensive because we could have received a ten-year sentence for illegal possession and/or transport of explosives—I usually made these deliveries at night—and we couldn't be certain who these people were." Since Indian autos are rarely new, they already supposed that these were white men, whether lawmen or rancher vigilantes they did not know. The pursuing cars came down the long and muddy farm road from the highway and paused at the Little cabin, where one driver was seen to speak briefly to June Little, after which, a little faster now, they came lurching down the hill and across the pasture. "We decided to stop and confront the situation; we had to deal with them."

X and the driver got out of the red pickup, holding semiautomatic rifles. "There were AR-15s all over the Res, after Wounded Knee," he said. "We never raised those guns—I been around enough to know that pointing a gun is considered to be assault—but we wanted 'em to see weapons, as a warning, 'cause we were on Indian property now, and we weren't going to let 'em chase us around. Anyway, when they saw those guns, they stopped immediately."

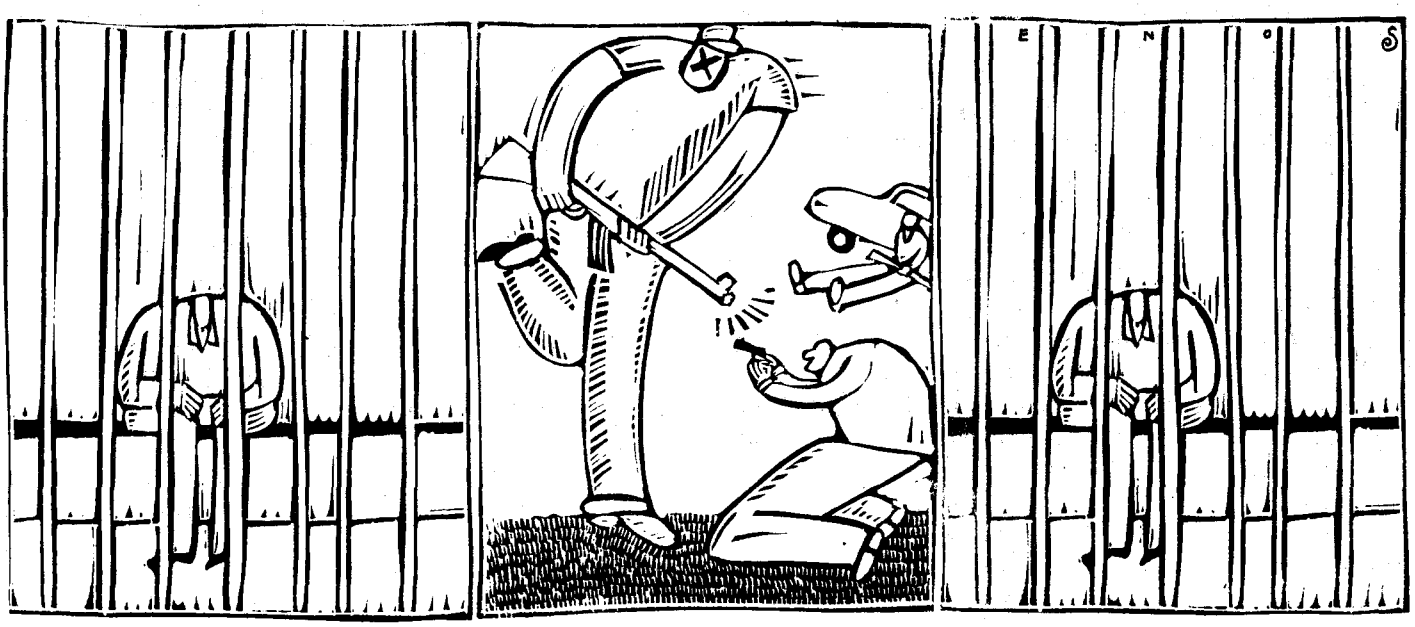
The two cars halted in the middle of the lower pasture, one behind the other, and two white men got out and took weapons from their trunks. "Then one of 'em raised his weapon to his shoulder, and we jumped behind the truck, and when he fired, we responded with a burst over their heads."

I asked X if he was certain the strangers had fired first, since the rumor was that the Indians had opened fire with a warning shot. He shook his head. "There was no reason for us to fire first. We had a truck full of explosives. The very last thing we wanted was a firefight." He acknowledged that the white man might not have fired toward the pickup, and that the shot might have been some sort of signal.

At the racketing of gunfire, armed Indians appeared out of the cabins. "There was others got into it, I don't know who. At first it was just covering fire so people in the cabins could get away, just like Wounded Knee. We could have killed lawmen at Wounded Knee if we had wanted to." While this first exchange was taking place, the men at the AIM camp by the White River were grabbing their guns and running uphill, still some distance away.

With bullets flying, X and his partner jumped back into the pickup and drove it up behind the cabins, where they quickly unloaded the boxes of explosives from the bed. By this time, though they didn't know it, the men and young boys from the AIM camp had joined the fight, having taken up positions on the bluff, whereas most of the Indians living in the cabins had fled into the woods and across the fields. X and his partner drove the red pickup back toward June Little's cabin, planning to head out, but about that time, another car came onto the farm from the country road, and "we fired a few rounds at its tires to stop it where it was." ("Agent Adams," I said, and X just shrugged.) "We hung around a little while, trying to see what we could do to help. It was us those men had followed in here, and we thought we ought to help to get them out. At that point, we looked down at their cars and saw that both of 'em were out of commission."

By now, both agents had been wounded. Their fire had subsided, as had the Indians', though sporadic shooting was taking place between the Indians behind the cabins and the lawmen



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beginning to gather on the country road. X decided that the only hope was to take hostages. "We wanted to stop the shooting quick, trade our way out of there."

Bob Robideau nodded, still mystified as to why the strangers, hopelessly outnumbered, had not retreated, or at least sought cover in the nearby woods that descended from the pasture to the river. The only conclusion seemed to be that they were expecting reinforcements, and, in fact, those reinforcements gathered swiftly. Within ten minutes, the lonely country road a half mile to the north was lined with cars, and soon the farm would be surrounded. "There was a terrific sense of *hurry*," X said. "The situation had to be resolved quickly."

A few weeks earlier, when we met in Seattle, Bob had wondered why the two men in the red pickup came down the hill to take the agents hostage, since he and his partners were doing the same thing. "We had left the woods and were coming up on those cars from behind." The next thing they knew, the red pickup was coming down the hill. He saw the man in the passenger seat and an AR-15 sticking out the window.

Neither X nor his partner recalled seeing the three men sneaking across the pasture from the woods; they were concentrated on the two men by the cars. "Both of 'em looked like they were out of it," X was saying. "I sure didn't expect any resistance." The red pickup drew up almost alongside and X jumped out with his AR-15. "One of 'em was sitting on the ground, leaning back against the car door with his rifle across his lap. He never moved but he didn't look dead, his eyes were open. The other was kneeling in the pasture grass a few feet away, bent over with both hands between his legs, rocking in pain, like he'd been kicked in the groin. I was about to say, *Don't move and you won't get hurt*, something like that, but I never had time, because when he seen me, he made some kind of a grunt—maybe he cussed—and raised both hands, holding a handgun, and he fired at kind of an angle, down into the ground. Later I wondered if he fired prematurely, or even by mistake, but there wasn't time to figure things out because after he fired, he kept on coming up with that damned gun."

"And he never said anything?"

"If he did, his voice was drowned out by his gun, and anything further was drowned out by mine. I only fired two or three rounds—him once and the other feller twice."

X said after a pause, "I'm not a person who gets rattled easily. Just the opposite, in fact." (Here I glanced at Robideau, who told me later, "What he said was true. He's not the kind to lose his head. This man was committed to our Indian struggle a long time before that, and he's *still* committed. He has really sacrificed for his beliefs.") "But I have quick reactions," X was saying, "and I've always been good with a rifle, and I wasn't going to give that guy a second shot. I never even raised my gun, I fired from the hip, because he was only a few feet away, it was point-blank range. The other one was armed and might be shooting, for all I knew, but I didn't even have time to think: *I can't afford to take a chance*. I swung around in the same motion, shot him, too."

It was revealed in the trials that the second man, Jack Coler, was already near death from loss of blood, but all X saw was a man sitting up, and the man was armed.

"I didn't shoot those men because I was angry or nervous. I wasn't mad at them. I wasn't! If I'd wanted to kill them, I could have done that easily, from a safe distance, without risking danger in any way." In his distress, X was breathing heavily behind his hood. "I fired because I couldn't afford to wait for a second shot, from either one of them. If our positions had been reversed, he would have shot me, I know that much."

"So the other guy's eyes were open?"

"Yes."

"Was he looking at you?"

"Yes."

"But he never made a move of any kind."

"No." X shifted unhappily. "I thought the first one was incapacitated, too, and he'd just shown he had the capacity to kill me. Shooting them was just fear and quick reaction, all in one motion—instantaneous, a split-second response."

"It was self-defense, then. There was no element of anger?"

"I'm absolutely sure it was self-defense, though I understand why others might question that. Sure, I was apprehensive—partly apprehensive, partly calm, the way you are in combat. But I wasn't angry. We weren't fighting because we hated white people but because we loved our own. It was only later I felt angry. I thought, You stupid bastards, coming in there where you were warned there would be trouble, then starting a shootout with women and children in those cabins, and then not getting the hell out while you still could—you got yourselves killed, and got Joe Stuntz [an Indian] killed, and you spoiled the lives of so many good people!"

X ran back to the red pickup, where his partner was "freaking." Remembering the man's terror, X shook his head. "The poor guy wasn't one of us, he wasn't a longtime AIMer or anything, he was just drawn into helping us by my enthusiasm. And here he was, mixed up with two dead bodies!"

"I stayed over there by the green cabin till we went down to take hostages," Bob reflected. "I never saw that red pickup at all until it was coming down the hill while we were sneaking up across the pasture." In Seattle he'd told me they were blocked by the agents' cars and couldn't see just what was happening: "All we knew was, a few shots were fired, and the red pickup took off back up the hill and went on out of there." But now he acknowledged he had recognized X as the man in the passenger seat.

The red pickup went out past the Little cabin and left the property by the east road past Jumping Bull Hall. "There were already roadblocks on the paved road," X said, "but they weren't set up right. We were ready to shoot our way out, but nobody tried to stop us, and we went back to Rapid [City]. I don't mean it was over for me. It isn't over for me even today. I stayed visible and I stayed active, and tried to avoid seeming paranoid."

"Here you are in a friend's house, with another man who is in sympathy with your predicament, having to hide behind a hood like some sort of terrorist—how does that make you feel?"

He shifted in his chair, and barely nodded. He said he had never gone underground—"I am hiding in the light"—but one way or another, since those few shattering seconds in that hot noontime sixteen years ago, he has been condemned for life to wear a mask. □

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READING AROUND.

ELIZABETH POCHODA

Suffer the Little Children

Taking a break from the postwar *tristesse* evident elsewhere in the press this month, the May issue of **Mother Jones** opens a new offensive on behalf of the most abused and underrepresented members of the Republic—children. "America's Dirty Little Secret: We Hate Kids" packages the tireless optimism of Marian Wright Edelman (who persists in believing that the money spent on war and S&L bailouts can be diverted to children's health care, shelter, nutrition and education) with a number of other elements, most notably a report card on the Bush Administration's record with respect to the young. Maybe there will be a movement on behalf of kids. Maybe this nifty chart will be its placard. In any case, indispensable reading. Ditto Arthur Kempton's remarkable discussion of black youth in the April 11 issue of **The New York Review of Books**. Ostensibly a review of three very loosely related titles, it has more to say about the way our culture acts on young black males, and their response to it, than anything in recent memory. It also has a more sensibly sympathetic discussion of rap than you can find in the music press. By far the most surprising and important piece of the month.

Red in Tooth and Claw

What's left of nature? Still enough to argue about. Writing in **The American Prospect**, Alan Wolfe visits what he describes as the extreme outcroppings of the ecology movement—Gaia, deep ecology and animal rights—and finds them guilty of having displaced man and most of cultural experience from the equation. Two other articles—Bill McKibben's essay on Gary Snyder in the same issue of **NYRB** as Kempton's and Charles Siebert's lament for the disappearance of zoos in the current **Harper's**—find inspiring middle ways between the absolutism Wolfe criticizes and the plunder of the environment. No dippy environmentalist himself, McKibben sees Snyder as someone who has found a way of living that shows respect for both man and nature. Siebert's highly original defense of zoos is a delightfully oblique refutation of squishheaded attacks on them, and in the process a profound meditation on the entire natural world as by now a zoo of our making.

Computing the New PC

Adopting Norman Schwarzkopf's Hail Mary maneuver against Iraq (one division up the center, the other outflanking the left), the Genoveses (Eugene and Elizabeth Fox) have moved in on the "political correctness" debate. Approvingly reviewing Dinesh D'Souza's vitriolic attack on the universities, *Illiberal Education*, in **The New Republic**, Eugene Genovese describes a politically correct cabal of Marxists, poststructuralists and unspecified others as front men on campus for a new McCarthyism and calls for counterterrorists to "draw their blood" and make them "suffer hard blows." Wow! Reviewing the same book for **The Washington Post**, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese struck a more moderate tone while also wholeheartedly endorsing the ravings of D'Souza. That universities are hotbeds of political subversion overseen by academic thought police will surprise anyone who has spent any time at one lately. And that includes Christopher Lasch, whose essay on university politics and culture in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of **Salmagundi** restores perspective to the matter of political correctness by granting the existence of academic radicalism and observing that none of it approaches the foothills of subverting the "corporate control of the universities; and it is corporate control, not academic radicalism, that has 'corrupted our higher education.' "

Bushwhacked

The press has been running even with the general public in its eagerness to give George Bush an overwhelming approval rating on the war. Two recent Bush jobs—one on George in **M inc.** by Lally Weymouth, and the other on Barbara by Judith Viorst in **Redbook**—read like tryouts for Peggy Noonan's old gig. But, no, Norman Mailer's "How the Wimp Won the War" in the May **Vanity Fair** doesn't follow suit and is, as a result of a number of vintage Mailerisms, the one digest of the war so far that is worth keeping. (On the wacko side of war follow-ups, **National Geographic** concluded its trip to Iraq by observing that you could have divined both Hussein's fall and a warning against future incursions in the biblical phrase "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.") Too bad there was no Pulitzer for the seven **New York Newsday** columnists (Jimmy Breslin, Jim Dwyer, Sydney Schanberg, John Leonard, Jonathan Schell, Sheryl McCarthy and Robert Reno) who kept antiwar sentiment alive in the Eastern press. Too bad the irascible Reno is not syndicated. Recently, he's been stripping the bark off Barbara Bush for her attacks on the Office of Thrift Supervision's "harassment" of Neil Bush. Which brings to mind a good interview with Pete Brewton in the April 5 **Texas Observer.** In it, **The Houston Post**'s Brewton, who single-handedly uncovered the role of the C.I.A. and the mob in the looting of savings and loan institutions, describes how he got the story and, not incidentally, how he shook the Bush family tree in the process.

Elsewhere

Artpaper, a handsome, witty, interactive, even progressive review from the Twin Cities, inspires hope for the resurgence of the alternative press in a '90s mode. Worth a look even if you've never been to Minneapolis. **Salmagundi**: On the mandarin side of things, the aforementioned twenty-fifth anniversary issue has some other delights: Jim Miller's essay on Foucault; Ellen Willis on Stanley Crouch; Roger Shattuck on a painting by John La Farge; and a little gem by Mary Gordon on the painter Berthe Morisot. **Eating Well** contains a report, "The Case of the Lawyer Who Loved Salad," on the viruses that survive from the hands of migrant workers to wind up on the plates of the middle class. Nicely done, the thrust of the piece has less to do with middle-class infections than the appalling health conditions of migrant labor. **Spy**: It has to be said, this month's high school yearbook of the rich and famous is inspired.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The New Custerism

DAVID SEALS

When Kevin Costner was shooting *Dances With Wolves* in 1989 in South Dakota, where I live, a full-blood Lakota elder gave me a copy of the screenplay to read. David Bald Eagle lives way the hell out in the middle of the South Dakota prairie on the Cheyenne River Reservation, home of the Minneconjou and Sans Arc and Two Kettle Lakota Sioux, about as far from Hollywood as you could get, culturally, and still be in the same country. He ranches on about 600 acres leased from the tribe and lives in a ramshackle house built of scrounged lumber from the nearby town of Sturgis (only eighty miles away, that's considered close out here) and the reservation ghettos of Cherry Creek and Red Scaffold. It's a desolate, beautiful landscape without trees or much water, but Dave loves it. So do I. We sit out on his porch in the total darkness and peaceful silence, with no street lights or traffic or sirens roaring, and watch the fireflies and talk about the Spirits of our ancestors scaring the hell out of somebody all the time and how things are "all fucked up" on the reservation with the booze and no jobs and phony-baloney medicine men and women putting curses on people because they're jealous or some damn thing. It's the damnedest mess. But mostly we laugh about it and people come over to visit all the time and we cook up a pile of food and maybe watch something on the VCR with the kids. There's always a pack of kids around, abandoned sometimes by their parents off on a drunk somewhere, playing with the goats and horses and cats and dogs, looking for snakes and birds' nests and gold.

Dave is over 70 and has the handsome Lakota features of classic popular conception, and he's worked in a number of movies over the years as an actor and cultural consultant. He just shakes his head recalling the day a helicopter landed out by his place, bringing the script of *Wolves* for his perusal and assessment. He was flattered by the attention, but not too much. It was mostly pretty funny. He wouldn't say anything more about the script except that it was a typical Hollywood deal, and maybe I should read it to see what I thought, since he, like many Indians around Cheyenne River, thinks I know something more about movies than most people, owing to the fact that my book *The Powwow Highway* was taken by Hollywood.

David Seals is the author of The Powwow Highway *(Penguin/New American Library) and* Thunder Nation *(Sky & Sage Books). This essay will appear in other form in his collection* The Poetic College *(Sky & Sage, P.O. Box 3606, Rapid City, SD 57701. Paper $9.95).*

What is this Custerism? The celluloid residuals of Manifest Destiny.

I hunkered down on his big old comfortable couch discovered in an alley in town, with the kids and goats outside screaming, and read about the good old days in the 1860s when a wounded and disillusioned cavalry officer came out West to escape the horrors of the Civil War. He was a man of better sensibilities than most of us, appreciative of the wide open solitudes and beauties of nature, and a heroic warrior too. Quite a guy. Just as he was meeting up with some Indians—maybe they were the Sioux or maybe the Comanche, I couldn't tell—a few carloads of Indians piled in the door on some errand or other and we proceeded to drink coffee and discuss the possibilities of getting some work in this new movie. Dave was mad because the tribe still hadn't gotten out to his place, after ten years of pleading, threatening and cajoling, to dig a well, so he still didn't have indoor plumbing or anything. He has to haul his water in barrels in the back of one of his pickups—which are always breaking down out on the bumpy rutted dirt roads—from a faucet at the new Takini High School a few miles up the gravel road.

Now, you have to understand the peculiar government-to-government relationship of the United States of America to the Great Sioux Nation. According to the 1868 Ft. Laramie treaty—which followed an 1851 treaty, and presumably reflected the turmoil and conditions leading up to it at just about the same time and place our *Dances With Wolves* paean occurs—the Sioux under Red Cloud had kicked General Sherman's butt all over Wyoming and the Americans were suing for unconditional peace on the Bozeman and Oregon Trails. In a mood of great conciliation and general patriotic national pride, the Sioux and Arapaho agreed to a cease-fire if the Americans would abandon their forts and go away forever; in turn, the victors would allow them to have their roads to the golden Elysian fields of California and Oregon and Montana. Sherman agreed to the terms, promising what later became all of western South Dakota from the east side of the mighty Missouri River to the Wyoming border to the Indians as their sovereign national territory; plus, they got for unceded hunting territory parts of Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska and Montana.

It was a great empire. Of course, Red Cloud didn't like the fact that other chiefs were sitting around challenging his claim to leadership, like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse—who both refused to sign the treaty, by the way, smelling a rat—so he went to Washington wearing a big top hat and shook hands with President U.S. Grant. Grant and the Congress ratified the treaty and it became law.

Anyway, all this was being set up while the story of *Dances With Wolves* was going on right in the middle of it, but I couldn't discover any of that as I went back to reading the screenplay by Michael Blake. There were some very poetic and nature-loving Indians all over the place, and a beautiful white babe who had been captured as a pioneer child—her whole family butchered by them sneaky Pawnees—but nowhere were there any of the complex intratribal feuds going on or whiskey traders and railroad men and land speculators who were everywhere out here. Mostly what we got was some pretty thoughts about living in harmony with nature and each other. That's O.K., I figured, what the hell, it's at least pro-Indian and might bring in a few jobs for the troops.

But I had a lot still stuck in my craw about Hollywood making Indian movies too, after my experience. It requires backing up a little to understand, about like what it takes to even begin to grok the history of European-indigenous relations on the broader political and social and reli-

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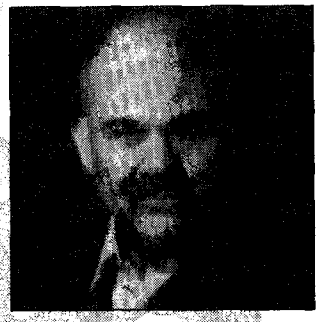
gious scales. It's probably a lot like the complex Arab-Israeli mess, and may be just as difficult to untangle.

Just about everybody would probably agree that the *image* of a culture is as important, especially in this high-tech world of instant global telecommunications, in the perception of it or of a race of people as whatever lies in the *actual* truth of that culture. Indians have often been victims of stereotyping—Custerism, I call it—and this reduction of the image of a people kills as surely as any real-life, Wounded Knee–type massacre. What is this Custerism? The celluloid residuals of Manifest Destiny, played out as emotional climax.

The blatant racism of the "Old Custerism" as exemplified by Ronald Reagan's portrayal of General George in the 1940 *Santa Fe Trail* must surely be obvious to anyone who hasn't already prejudged Custer and his American cavalry as the good guys and Crazy Horse and his Indians as the bad guys who wantonly butchered Our Troops. The parallels of a Hollywood actor becoming a Washingtonesque semidivine President-Protector-King are insidiously apparent, and betray a nationalistic cant in the film industry that can only be characterized as propagandistic. The usage by U.S. generals recently of the term "Indian Country" when referring to Iraqi-occupied Kuwait brings what many people might consider the harmless nature of the entertainment business into the deadly arena of politics. (The May *Esquire* blows its bugle about the "Surrender in Indian Country" too.)

The Old Custerists rounded up Un-Americans in Hollywood and New York in the late 1940s, about when John Ford was cranking out so-called classics like *Fort Apache*. In that little gem we hear Colonel Henry Fonda complain to Captain John Wayne that they have little chance for "glory or advancement," because while some of their fellow officers are "leading their well-publicized campaigns against the great Indian nations—the Sioux and the Cheyenne—we are asked to ward off the gnat stings and flea bites of a few cowardly digger Indians." The Duke replies, "Your pardon, Colonel, you'd hardly call the Apaches 'digger Indians,' sir." (If only Hank Fonda had known how valuable the Apaches would become as attack helicopters!) The nauseating thing about Ford's endless litanies to racism, like *The Searchers* especially, is that they are apologized away as being exposures of racism! *Cheyenne Au-*

DOUBLE DISCH



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tumn made author Mari Sandoz sick to her stomach when Ford butchered it into a white love story instead of the truly tragic odyssey of the Cheyennes from Oklahoma to Montana in the 1870s.

We're not even talking here about the obvious crap like *The Last of the Mohicans* or all the Hiawathas and the thousands of spectaculars and cartoons and shows like *F Troop* that are still flooding cable TV every day, poisoning every new generation. I'm trying to point to what is called the best of American moviemaking, the Oscar-worthy (if not winning) films of high artistic merit. *Broken Arrow* and *Shane* and *Red River* fall into this category. Why, in what are otherwise wonderful works that I love too (I'm from the West, born and bred), must they always throw in the flaming arrows coming out of the dark from the sneaky subhumans, the unspeakable implications of things done to Our Women, the truncated grunts and groans of people thereby depersonalized because they don't talk, can't talk, English?

Things got better in the wake of the sixties, we are told. *Little Big Man* was another watershed, like *Broken Arrow*, portraying a decidedly pro-Indian point of view. It was like a breathing spell between the Old Custerism and the New Custerism, which we'll get to shortly. While it still had the all-important requisite of a white man as the central protagonist, it tried mightily to understand the rather mysterious ways of the strange people living in tents. It had a cute chief in it, who cracked jokes and spoke poetically and was really a Human Being for a change. This was progress! Custer and Our Boys were shown slaughtering innocent women and children in bloody scenes. *Soldier Blue* showed the unbearable savagery of racism too. But these films were still set in a historical context, distant, almost irrelevant, and white people were always the characters in the central focus.

Then *Billy Jack* exploded on the scene. Ah, finally, a modern Indian in the middle of the worst redneck cowboy towns. I liked Pauline Kael's comments in *The New Yorker*; she found herself watching with a sympathetic smile, because even where the writing was terrible, the instincts were "mostly very good." It was sappy and melodramatic, with lots of lost white runaway kids trying to find a better society by living with the Indians, and one-dimensional white racists foaming like mad dogs, but golly, there were real Indian actors playing our songs and speaking articulately too! It was cool. They talked about treaties, and it was a box office hit and spawned a sequel and some Skins got some work for a while actually talking about the Bureau of Indian Affairs and dealing with some real and complex problems.

But the revolution sprouting on the bloody television images of Vietnam faded as the war ended, at least for the Americans, and Gollywood went back to romantic historical epics like Charles B. Pierce's things. I can't even remember the names. Richard Harris danced through one sequel after another of his masturbation fantasies as A Man Called Horse, a great warrior who comes to save the poor Indians who can't save themselves. We got books like *Hanta Yo*, purporting to tell the authentic story of the Sioux, which caused some Skins to swear they'd kill author Ruth Beebe Hill if she ever showed her face in Sioux Country. ABC rushed to produce a five-hour miniseries about it titled *Mystic Warrior*. Many Indians kind of enjoyed blue-eyed Trevor Howard being a cute old Chief in *Windwalker*, but for every one of these halfway-sincere attempts there were ten Charles Bronson or Chuck Connors–type flicks fulfilling noble savage fantasies.

In the 1980s the Custerism, like everything else, just got worse. We were treated to Larry McMurtry's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Lonesome Dove*, with Frederic Forrest as the half-breed maniac Blue Duck slaughtering and scalping everything and everyone he could get his hands on. *Young Guns* converted the village of Cerrillos, New Mexico, into an authentic replica of Billy the Kid's exciting and adventurous world of yore. To top it off, some film crew was also nearby in New Mexico about then shooting something they called *Powwow Highway*, which they claimed was based on a novel of the same name that I wrote.

To back up a little on this yarn, but without running over you with too much detail, I had indeed optioned my soul to the devil, and made $10,000. I was tired of outhouses and walking to the grocery store because I had no car, and stealing food too. My 7-year-old son Sky even got a part in the movie. He had fun, flying first-class up to Sheridan, Wyoming, where they were shooting, and staying in the Holiday Inn. He liked his fellow stars A Martinez, of soap opera *Santa Barbara* fame, and Gary Farmer.

But a disturbing story later filtered out about the film company's shooting in

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South Dakota, on Bear Butte, a mountain sacred to the Cheyenne and Sioux. They had protested the film company's being there, so it left. Gary Farmer dismissed the incident with disgust. No one else could tell me anything. About a month afterward, in Denver, a full-blood Tsistsistas Southern Cheyenne elder, Richard Tall Bull, told me, "Three Indians died because of your movie." Huh? "They were struck dead by lightning. They had passed themselves off as spiritual leaders and got some money from that film crew. They were winos." He was madder at the Skins than at the film company or me.

For New Custerists the romance must not be sullied.

What does all this have to do with Custerism in the cinema? This whole experience revealed to me not only the frightening political dimensions of the entertainment industry but also the cultural onslaught of insensitivity. I had prayed on Bear Butte a month before the movie option ran out back in July 1987, and gone through a terrifying ordeal in a courtroom as a politically suspect AIMster, and my prayers to the Goddess Wohpe for help for the people were, in my superstitious heathen estimate, answered when funding came in for the movie. There really is a mysterious world existing beside this one, a parallel dimension that can perhaps be explained not as much by physics or electromagnetism (yet) as by the symbolic poetry of mythology. It is the world where lightning strikes those whose intentions betray greed and self-importance. It is the perspective elders like Tall Bull and Bald Eagle give when death and life intermingle as parts of our political and economic survival.

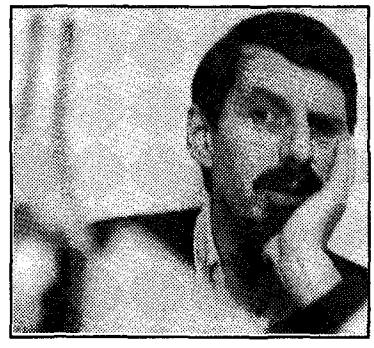
Dave Bald Eagle was eager to rush out and get a job on *Dances With Wolves* because that was an economic necessity, but he also saw the foolishness of the thing and joked about how he always tried to stay in the background in the crowd scenes so maybe no one would notice him in the movie. Other full-blooded Lakota elders in it, like Dave Yakima Chief, told me the same thing. They were of course flattered by Kevin Costner's invitation to be in his movie, and by all accounts he is, as Vincent Canby remarked in his *New York Times* review of the movie when it came out in late 1990, "a foursquare kind of guy." But many Indians are disturbed that, although such movies help pay a few bills for a little while, they are not as harmless as they might seem: They are part of a system that routinely throws around millions and millions of dollars while tens of millions of people in this country, in chillingly high proportions people of color, don't have much more than a box of macaroni in the cupboard.

How has Kevin Costner helped us? His movie has reaped over $150 million and Dave Bald Eagle still has to use an outhouse. Dave Chief doesn't even have that much—he is homeless at age 63. These two pointed out to me what is at best a questionable cultural call in the making of *Dances With Wolves*: The men generally speak Lakota in the feminine form; the screenplay's dialogue was translated by a woman, who also served as the primary linguistic coach. Many elders around here, including Grampa Bill Horn Cloud, are mad about it. (Imagine if Costner and his baseball buddies in *Bull Durham* had spoken as if they'd stepped out of *Little Women*.) This in a movie lauded for its "authenticity"—which was more closely achieved when it came to props: Joe Flying By and the ruling elders' council, and even the Pipe Keeper himself, Arvol Looking Horse, preferred that Costner and his Hollywood Indian Floyd Westerman not represent the Pipe in the movie. The Pipe is the sacred Canupa of White Buffalo Calf Maiden, who founded the buffalo culture nineteen generations ago; but they went right ahead and smoked it anyway.

This is the New Custerism—General George sporting velvet gloves—and so-called liberals are the New Custerists, torn between their cultural guilt and self-interest. It goes beyond James Fenimore Cooper's good intentions into stuff that does indeed pave the road to hell. It encompasses not just trampling on what might be sacred but a hidden Victorianism as well, which has to clean up my dirty beer-can-strewn highway or its historical equivalent, keep us at a safe remove, make us Good Indians again, like Costner's and Blake's syrupy noble savages. Books or movies like this neutralize real action, the possibility for social or political reform that might arise from truly stimulating literature or drama. (This idyll takes place, incidentally, in landscapes where the David Bald Eagles

Selected Poems

ROBERT CREELEY



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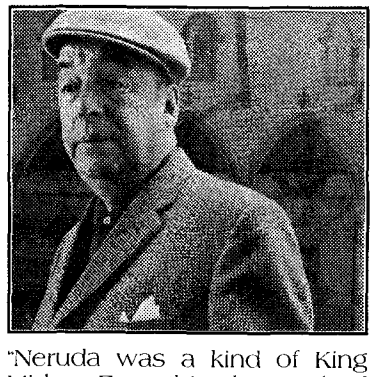

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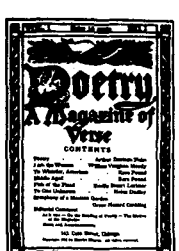

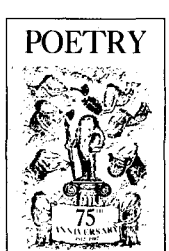

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can't leave their homes untended or drunks will sweep in to loot them; and the filmically perfect village of tipis *Wolves* shows at one point is perched on a Belle Fourche River that is undrinkable and polluted from gold mine tailings.

Instead of creating a great new multicultural paradigm, *Dances With Wolves*, by its huge success, is spawning more of the same old clichés. Where the Old Custerists didn't mind blatantly stereotyping Indians as savages, for New Custerists the sentimentality and romance must not be sullied. *Son of the Morning Star* rushed into production and was seen for four hours this winter on ABC, striking while the iron was hot. Not even the Uncle Tomahawks who have rejoiced ad nauseam about the glories of Costner & Co. liked this latest paean to G.A. Custer, who was after all really a complex kind of guy and not just a blood-and-glory murderer but a good husband and mostly a foursquare Joe. *The New York Times* rejoiced about *Son of the Morning Star* and said that maybe Indians will be the social cause célèbre of the Gay Nineties.

Wolves was up for twelve Oscars and won seven; Costner decided he liked bows and arrows and moved on to *Robin Hood*. The Skins in the trade have gone with Uncle Tomahawk: They're shooting another remake of *The Last of the Mohicans*, if you can believe it, though there are a few modern-day films in the works. Robert Redford is doing a Tony Hillerman mystery in Arizona, and I'm hearing conflicting stories from the Navajos and Hopis about it. Some of them are protesting it because of purported trespass on sacred areas. A Hopi friend of mine, Hartman Lomaweima, from Second Mesa, says the movie company has wandered into a local feud about a gravel pit. He laughs about it; others, like a Pueblo lawyer I know, say it's a serious cultural travesty again. (John Nichols, who wrote *The Milagro Beanfield War*, which Redford directed on the screen, told me, "It was the worst experience of my life. They used such a picturesque backdrop that you forget how difficult it is to live a life of poverty.") And *Young Guns* veterans are doing a thing around Wounded Knee and Leonard Peltier here in South Dakota, produced by Robert De Niro. Redford has also funded a Peltier documentary—its director was seen cruising around here last summer in a Mercedes limo—though Steve Robideau, Peltier's cousin and the director of a defense committee for him, probably the most knowledgeable and earnest man in

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the world regarding Leonard's call for a new trial, says he hasn't been contacted about it. What's more, Ted Turner's got features planned for cable TV, and the rumor mill has it that others are thinking of a series to be called *Lakota Moon*. We wait to see if we get anything more than moonshine. □

Prizewinning Poets—1991

*The winners of Discovery—*The Nation *'91 are Cathleen Calbert, Martin Edmunds, Karen I. Jaquish and Joshua Weiner. A reading of their poems was scheduled for Monday, April 29, at The Poetry Center, 92nd Street Y in New York City. The contest was judged by Jonathan Galassi, Katha Pollitt and Liz Rosenberg. Now in its seventeenth year, the competition combines The Poetry Center's Discovery contest and* The Nation*'s poetry prize. It is open to poets who have not published in book form.*

—Grace Schulman, poetry editor

FAINTING

Those steps, cooler than I could have believed,
and my face, in absolute harmony. The collapse
of my body. Only my cheeks, toes, fingers remaining.
Then the voices of men or, more often, women
in tones of despairing angels, devoted solely to me,
calling from above. Each moment, a miracle,
and I suddenly wonderful, a child Hermione:
"Look! Her eye's opening. The color's returning."
When my skin awoke, drops of water blessed
the top of my head to the soles of my feet.
From other children, it's true, there was
some mean-spirited talk of ray-guns
and susceptibility. Well, we were all
trapped in church, and it wasn't their fault
if they couldn't stop breathing.
Not for them the drama, being lifted into the arms
of strange men and whisked away. Yes, the beauty
of it was not being guilty of anything. For I tried
to hold on, my uneven curls unraveling, and I
kneeling, big shoulders on either side of me, and I
watching my hands press together, the little gloves,
a white wicker purse dangling from one wrist.
Inside: a hanky and a dime. I tried waiting
until I could walk down the aisle and be given
a little something to suck on, always comforting,
the wafer dissolving on the roof of my mouth,
like Chinese paper candy, so mysterious and lingering.
Then I'd be happy, and it would be ending.
But sometimes, I'd have to leave early,
and a child doesn't leave easily.
I'd wait until it was too late—"Why didn't you
tell me?"—until my eyes were large and dark
as I looked up to find my mother's face. Then the rush
to lay me out, in the air, on the concrete,
ladies pulling down my dress, trying to press my knees
together (they would not stop dividing),
waking to promises from my repentant mother
of love and new Sunday mornings until everyone
gave up on my legs and talked softly to me.
So Emily was wrong to be afraid, wasn't she?
For I knew then, I knew I could be controlled
only until I let go.

Cathleen Calbert

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SONG FOR MISCHA

The time for heroes has passed us by.
We are not starving; we hide those who are.
Yesterday we slept with our boots off.
Tomorrow we'll not sleep for the sound of drums.

We are not starving; we hide those who are.
This landscape contains scores of memories.
Tomorrow we'll not sleep for the sound of drums.
So bittersweet, our longing has the taste of blood.

This landscape contains scores of memories.
Hoarding our wants is now nearly commonplace.
So bittersweet, our longing has the taste of blood.
While we look at yesterday, he refutes tomorrow.

Hoarding our wants is now nearly commonplace.
As he talks to the left, he looks to the right.
While we look at yesterday, he refutes tomorrow.
The scent of spring is clogged with foreboding.

As he talks to the left, he looks to the right.
The time for heroes has passed us by.
The scent of spring is clogged with foreboding.
Yesterday, we slept with our boots off.

Karen I. Jaquish

OVERLOOKING BERKELEY

Clear night.
The endless net
of shivering lights

seems to release
a heat you feel
even this high,

this removed
from sirens, guitars,
a gunning motor.

A shout. Up here
I imagine
in the bright clotted

stream denials
of love, money
exchanged. The moon

hangs like a bell
between hours.
An owl opens

over the drop,
soft-plumed and
silent above

the research lab.
Back on my bike,
pumping further up

the steep incline,
only the sound
of each labored breath,

each revolution
of the crank, the air
a damp whisper.

Musk. From a plant?
At the peak one
poised moment—

then dropping,
the everyday
momentum of the world

pulling me fast
and faster still
down the buckled

hillside, body
tipped toward
the city's braided

excess, its colonies
of scrap, invention,
coded impulse,

the rush itself
a promise beyond
mere falling

past these blind
solicitations:
movies, songs,

fast food,
a few dollars,
her voice vibrating

along the wire
I fly beneath.
I'm tingling, taut

against the bike's
clank and rattle.
I can barely breathe.

Joshua Weiner

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NOCTURNE

Over St. John's spire
the cross hangs fire.

So, like a switchblade
quivering in its mark,
pinning down the boundary
of Harlem after dark,

a crane's steel spire
slices open the air.
Reflected in a pothole's
black basin, it vibrates there.

Around it, the sirens
and electronic car alarms
broadcast their flashes.
A woman with folded arms

and Three Roses on her breath
walks these blocks barefoot.
A coat on a crutch sells meth.
On the Cathedral roof,

standing under the lights
for safety, the Archangel Gabriel
lifts his horn of plenty
over Morningside Heights.

Above the martyrs and saints
now lost in the general dark,
he trumpets the resurrection
over Morningside Park.

Across the street, laughter
brightens the night in gusts
swirled from a door. The cafe's
steel skirt is laced with rust.

Outside the Hungarian,
on the coats of parishioners
crossing the walkway, myrrh's
scent of redemption mixes

with coffee and paprika—
on earth as it is in heaven?
The cooks are from Budapest,
the dishwashers, Dominica.

(But in La Rosita's, the scent
of candles lit for Mary's
intercession mixes
with arroz con calamares.)

Under a striped awning
on a sagging cardboard box
Angel deals three-card monte
and his brother sells socks.

A high-strung violin,
its bow sawing raw nerves,
murders its phrase again.
Wet headlights swerve

on the slick street to avoid
a ghostly somnambulist.
The driver's "Fuck you!" echoes
off cars through the fiberglas mist.

A quick red fox
in spikes and a mini goes by.
The blind beggar on his corner
hawks, and spits at the sky.

One eye on the action,
one eye on the block,
Angel flips the club queen
over on her back.

And the rain comes down in spades.
Black notes torn from the score
of the storm make Little Cuba's
dirt lot an Everglades.

Tires squeal. A woman screams.
Sweet jangle of shattering glass.
Or is it the wind-chimes
outside Moon Palace?

A posse of teenage girls,
cornrows, pigtails, and braids,
prick their victims with pins
they say are infected with AIDS.

A mother and her daughter
bum coins. The girl shivers hard,
watching loaves steam in a window.
A clock glares down like a guard.

The gypsy naps between palms.
A cop wrestles with a pencil
stub. The traffic jam's
horns blow as each driver

cranes for a good look.
A man sells one fork on a cloth.
The cop writes. The rain
blurs the words in his book.

In the neon windows of bars
glacial raindrops trace
a lifetime's wrinkles and scars
on an undergraduate face.

There's a queue for umbrellas. Not bread,
but the rain's disposable needles
are what we share with the poor.
Sirens stain everything red.

Taillights. The violin.
Pain, and pain's one note
held like a blade
to the night's throat.

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THOMAS M. DISCH

Miss Saigon
I Hate Hamlet

It has only been sixteen years since the fall of Saigon in April 1975, but at last the Vietnam War is ancient history, thanks largely to the War in the Gulf, which has provided a new template for war—not a quagmire ending in a rout but a rout ending in a quagmire. Consequently, Vietnam no longer belongs to the realm of current events but to that of history and romance, and it is possible to "use" it purely for purposes of spectacle and exotic color, as Verdi used pharaonic Egypt or Mitchell used the Civil War. *Miss Saigon*, the musical that has at last opened at the Broadway Theatre after so much hype, presents a Vietnam rinsed of all controversy, a place where lovers meet and fall in love, are parted tragically and then, still more tragically, reunited. The musical melodrama that tells their story is thoroughly effective, and little wonder: It has already done service for David Belasco in 1900 and for Puccini, whose adaptation, *Madama Butterfly*, premiered in 1904.

This latest adaptation by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, the French team that created *Les Misérables*, varies from the Belasco/Puccini version just enough to keep the audience off balance, providing the Pinkerton figure with a rival for Butterfly's love, a Viet Cong officer named Thuy, who rises to power in the war's aftermath and steers the plot briefly into *Tosca* territory. But the major addition is the introduction of the Engineer, an unscrupulous, luckless pimp, who brings Butterfly and Pinkerton together in Act I and, again, fatally, in Act II. He tends to dwell on the periphery of the plot, but in terms of theatrical and musical impact, the Engineer is the center of the show, thanks to the mesmerizing performance of Jonathan Pryce. Seeing Pryce in his last razzle-dazzle number, "The American Dream," one can see why producer Cameron Mackintosh stuck to his guns when Equity tried to get him to recast the part with a genetically correct Asian-American actor. Pryce has a voice like Al Jolson's, with an outrageously overexpressive vibrato, the difference being that Pryce's will shift its emotional register from sweetness to acidity in the midst of a single quaver. The top *Miss Saigon* tickets, for the front rows of the mezzanine, are going for $100; that's a lot of money, but not when you consider Pryce.

Lea Salonga, in the Butterfly role (except at matinee performances), turns in a four-star if not legendary performance. In a vocally demanding role, in which she must constantly dominate complex ensembles, she soars quite as high as the Schönberg score allows; her biggest moments are not her arias and duets but come at the crests of the action, when we have to believe in her plight. That she compels such belief is no small accomplishment.

Willy Falk, in the Pinkerton role, does not make us believe he's a marine or anything else but an earnest, good-looking tenor, though the fault is not in himself but in the score and book. (Indeed, I've yet to see a Pinkerton who didn't seem, essentially, a tenor.) He has the bad luck of having a sidekick, played by Hinton Battle, who is given a rousing, gospely song at the start of Act II that casts anything Falk has to sing in the shade, and the further bad luck of spending all his time in the latter part of the play in the company of a dense, whining wife (played by Liz Callaway).

As with most of the new breed of pop operas, the nonstop music has long

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stretches that merely serve to give a beat, a timbre, a color, a pulse; it is simply part of the stage machinery, like the lighting or the smoke machines. Opera purists may object to this (though often enough opera composers fill out three acts with similar quantities of musical wallpaper), but if one thinks of it as background music (the use it is put to), why be fussed? Schönberg demonstrates a wider musical palette than his only competitor, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and his batting average in the actual songs, his ratio between hummable and humdrum, is decidedly better than Webber achieved in either *Phantom* or *Aspects of Love*.

Writers have biographies written about them more than the facts of their lives would seem to warrant, because biographers, being writers themselves, have a familial interest in other members of their clan. Writers also tend to document their own lives more amply than do great embezzlers, courtesans or aviators, which makes biographers' work easier. By a similar law of affinity, actors love to play at being actors, by preference a legendary actor; or lacking that, a terrible ham like Archie Rice in *The Entertainer*; or best of all, a legendary actor who is also a terrible ham, like the ghost of John Barrymore in Paul Rudnick's amiable comedy *I Hate Hamlet*, at the Walter Kerr Theatre.

Barrymore played Hamlet on Broadway in the 1922-23 season for 101 performances (topping Booth's record by one), a performance acclaimed as "the most interesting, intelligent, and exciting Hamlet of our generation" (Heywood Broun) and the apex of a career that would begin its precipitous decline (Hollywood and alcohol) almost immediately afterward. Indeed, even during that 101-performance run, Barrymore's genius was erratic, and as the show continued, his Hamlet came more and more to resemble his Richard III. His was one of the representatively reckless careers of his era, and he was accorded the honor of being mythologized in his own time as the wastrel matinee idol Tony Cavendish in Kaufman and Ferber's *The Royal Family* (1927).

Great actors tend to cast other actors in the shade, and Barrymore, even as a shade himself, continues to upstage and outshine the other cast members, except for his co-star Celeste Holm, who shares Barrymore's advantage in that she only has to play herself, albeit under an alias, Lillian Troy, a great lady (agent) of the theater who had a fling with Barrymore back when. Holm understudied Ophelia in Leslie Howard's *Hamlet* of 1936; Barrymore made his Broadway swan song in 1939; it's conceivable. Just to have Celeste Holm on stage (and the role requires little more of her) gives the play a tingle of history.

The plot is simple as tic-tac-toe. Evan Handler plays a young actor famous for his TV series, *Rookie Doctor*, who has been imported from Hollywood by Joseph Papp to play Hamlet in Central Park. He rents an apartment that once had been Barrymore's. There is a séance during which the rookie actor utters the blasphemous title line, thus summoning Barrymore in a flash of lightning, who muses, appreciatively, "Am I dead, or just incredibly drunk?" In cold print, a couple of days later, that doesn't seem memorably droll, but as Barrymore delivers it, it brings down the house, and the house continues to be brought down at regular intervals from that point on, as the ghost coaxes and browbeats the reluctant young actor to do his duty to Shakespeare and to Art, and to resist the lure of more easy TV money proffered by Adam Arkin, who does this season's best turn as a callow Hollywood producer (a

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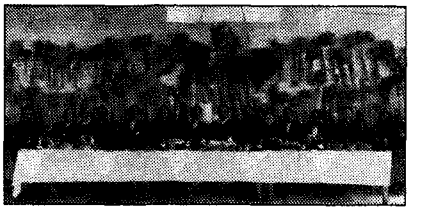

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category in which there's been a lot of competition), Jane Adams plays the actor's girlfriend, a ditzy virgin of a certain age, and contrives to be charming in a role that is nothing but shtick and hairstyle. Indeed, the play as a whole seems to have been written to prove how little accomplished actors need in the way of text to captivate an audience.

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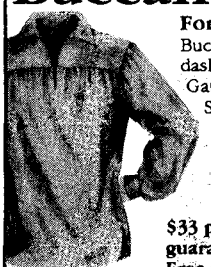

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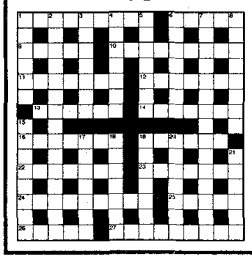

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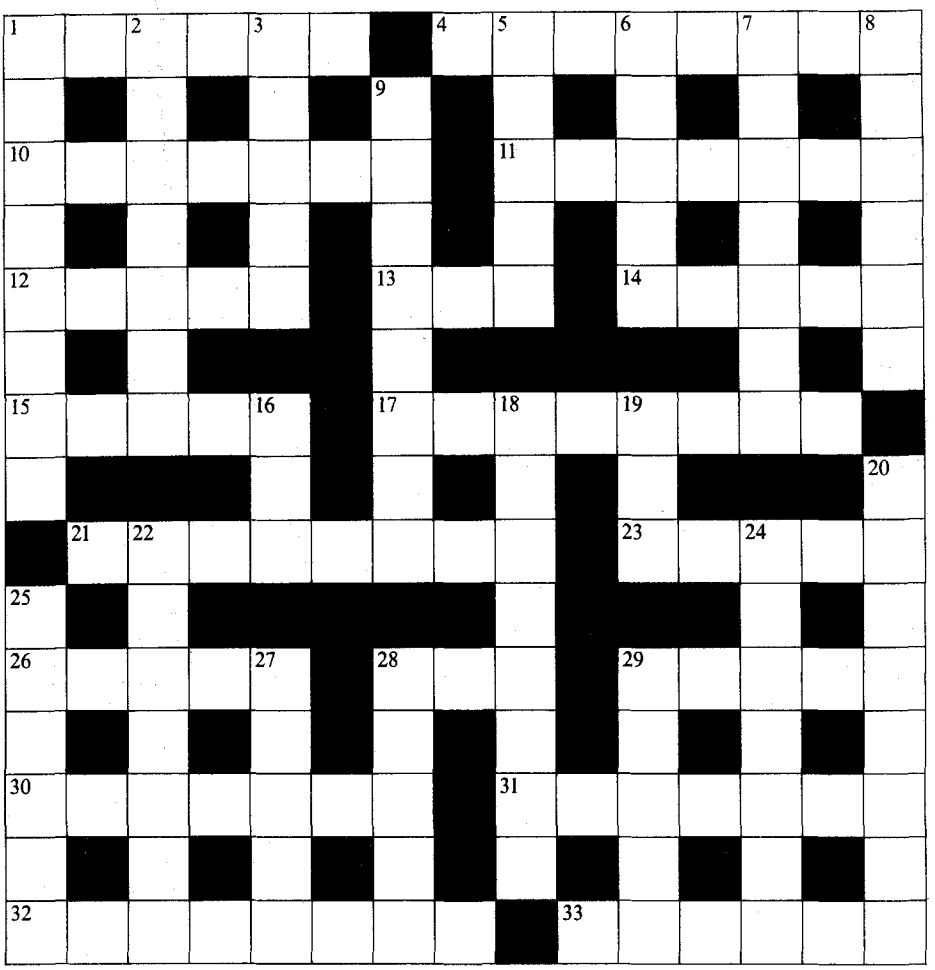

ACROSS

1 Drags one's feet because stock might be safely kept there? (6)
4 Not a dark dance, so someone in the field should catch it. (4,4)
10 Where some out-of-towners live? (7)
11 Reel? That's about right for Dan Patch, for example! (7)
12, 13 and 14 The way the Devil ran with Sir Francis? (Many like to add onions with this! (5,3,5)
15, 33 and 19 down What the end might want to do to the ball, with a number of players on both teams, seems to have no way out. (5,6-3)
17 Having a present, I tie some real things inside. (8)
21 In a get-away, some take it on the first part and keep pouring gravy on the second, especially when beaten up. (8)
23 Literally works on the stage like a rope, perhaps. (5)
26 An antedeluvian giant came first, and looked provocatively at someone. (5)
28 and 28 down Lit into the fool, and felt bad! (8)
29 and 18 down A big fat nothing with the magazine, perhaps, so sidestep the result. (5,3,5)
30 Sometimes associated with bliss, it might imply martial strife, with little change. (7)
31 Is British weather on the point of being a disturbing factor in U.S.S.R.? (7)
32 If there were another point to it, Old Sol's going to hell, but this might help with the burn. (8)
33 See 15

DOWN

1 and 25 In his case, did a doctor help? (Perhaps one had an indication of a quartet.) (8,6)
2 The spirit of Scandinavia? (7)
3 A little place to work, alternatively Hercules had quite a bit more than one in the government department. (5)
5 Did for others? (5)
6 They sometimes imply a baseball field is in this shape. (5)
7 In the case of the businessman, at a junction with some problem in the joint. (8)
8 It's hard to talk without it taking up the sun god when one of the cats is around. (6)
9 Bodies of people where a despicable type positively says something. (7)
16 The city of Boston, so-called. (3)
18 See 29 across
19 See 15 across
20 Where the riders' seats might be made like a twisted sneaky serpent. (8)
22 Have some trouble with Nero being upset? Flight might be difficult without it. (7)
24 With Cupid having one on, it might cause an environmental problem. (7)
25 See 1 down
27 Get rid of the following in the gutter, perhaps. (5)
28 See 28 across
29 Longfellow didn't know where one fell. (5)

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